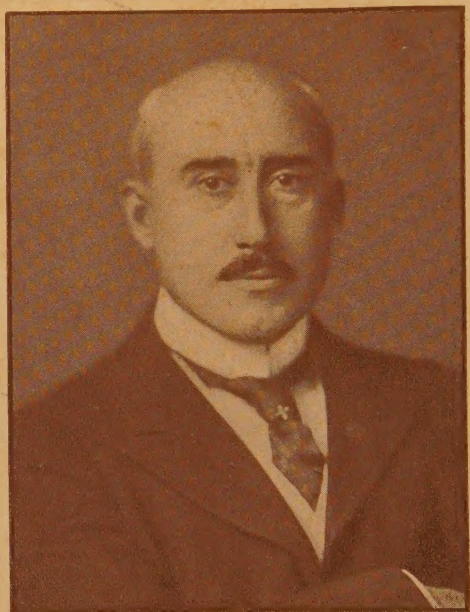


AMONG ^{the} HUMORISTS
AND
AFTER DINNER SPEAKERS





JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

AMONG THE HUMORISTS AND AFTER-DINNER SPEAKERS

A NEW COLLECTION
OF HUMOROUS STORIES
AND ANECDOTES

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY
WILLIAM PATTEN

Editor of *American Short Story Classics*,
Foreign Short Story Classics, etc.

VOL. II



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P R E F A C E

THE reception given to my collections "*American Short Story Classics*" and "*Foreign Short Story Classics*" has been of so hearty a character, and I have had so many letters from appreciative readers, that I am encouraged to offer this small collection of humorous stories in the hope that others may enjoy them as much as I have.

It contains all kinds, the dainty as well as the exuberant, but to claim completeness for the collection would be as absurd as it is unnecessary. A chronological anthology of humor is at best a dreary companion, as so much that expressed the fun-loving tendencies of a previous generation leaves us unmoved.

Life is a succession of mental readjustments, and the humor that appeals to us most must ever be that of our day and generation, that shares our point of view.

The truth that the maintenance of animal spirits is an asset in life grows out of a philosophy that is as old as mankind itself, and it has been summed up for us in the lines of that genial humorist, the author of "*The Winter's Tale*":

*"Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a:
A merry heart goes all the way,
Your sad tires in a mile-a."*

I take this opportunity to thank the authors whose courtesy, in allowing me to include their stories, has added so much to the

pleasure of making this collection, and Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, The S. S. McClure Co., The Century Co., The F. A. Stokes Company, Doubleday, Page & Co., Funk & Wagnalls Company, The Ridgway Company, Duffield & Company, and J. B. Lippincott Company for the permissions they kindly gave us to include stories of which they own the copyright.

W. P.

IN THE ABSENCE OF RULES

BY HENRY WALLACE PHILLIPS

WE had a pig when we was down on the little Chantay Seeche. The Doctor begged him off a rancher, to eat up the scraps around camp. A neat person was the Doctor and a durned good cook.

We called him the Doctor because he wore specs—that's as good a claim as many has to the title. His idee was that when the pig got fat he would sell him for lots of money, but long before Foxey Bill (which was piggy) had reached the market stage money couldn't buy him. He was a great pig. My notion of hogs, previous to my acquaintance with him, was that they were dirty, stupid critters, without any respectable feelings. Perhaps it's because animals get man-like, when you associate with 'em a great deal, or perhaps Foxey Bill was an unusual proposition; but, anyhow, he was the funniest, smartest brute I ever see, and we thought a slew of him.

Clean was no name for his personal appearance. Every Sunday the Doctor took a scrub-brush and piggy down to the creek and combined 'em with the kind assistance of a cake of soap. Then Foxey just shone white as ivory, and he'd trot around in front of us, gruntin' to attract our attention, till everybody'd

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said, "What a beautiful, clean pig—ain't he just right?" Then he'd grunt his thanks to the company and retire behind the shack for a nap. We used to fair kill ourselves laughing at that darned pig. He had the most wheedlin' squeal, so soft and pleadin'; and he'd look up at you with them skim-milk eyes of his so pitiful, when he wanted a chunk of sugar, that you couldn't refuse him.

And knowing! Honest, he knew more'n some men. One day old Wind River was tellin' some things (that *might* have happened to him) in his usual way, bein' most careful to get the dates and all dead right, you know—"Now, *was* his name Pete, after all? Comes to my mind it was Willyam—Willyam Perkins—Well—But, anyhow, him and me, we saw that Injun," and so forth. This was a Sunday, and the gang of us sittin' in a circle, fixing leathers and one thing and another and misstatin' history faster than a horse could trot, with Foxey Bill in the middle, cocking his head from one speaker to another, takin' it all in.

At last Wind River wound up the most startlin' and unlikely collections of facts he'd favored us with for some time. Up gets Foxey with a shriek and gallops around the house. Any man with the rudiments of intelligence would know he was hollerin': "Well, that's just too much for me; ta-ra-rum!"

Wind River looked scart. "Say!" says he. "Say! Thet hawg knows I'm er-lyin' jes' 's well 's I do!" After that old Windy used to talk to the pig as though they'd been raised together.

Foxey Bill made one miscalculation. He thought he was a small pet, like a cat. This didn't jibe with

the five hundred pounds of meat he toted. And, like a cat, one of his principal amusements was to have his back scratched. If you didn't pay attention to him, when he squealed so pretty for you to please curry him with a board, he'd hump up his back, like a cat, and rub against your legs. You instantly landed on your scalp-lock and waved the aforesaid legs in the air. Of course, when the other fellers saw this comin', they didn't feel it restin' on their conscience to call your attention to it—in fact, we sometimes busied one another talkin' to give Foxey a fair field. So Foxey had things his own way around the diggin's for some time.

Then comes bow-legged Hastings, our boss, with a ram tied hard and fast in the bottom of the wagon. He explains to us that the ram is valuable, but that he's butted merry Halifax out of everything down to home, and he don't want to shut him up, so will we please take care of him? And we said No—Wanitchee heap—we guessed not—never.

Then Hastings got mad and talked to us, flyin' his hands. Such a disoblign', stubborn, sour outfit he never saw, he said. What was the use of his bein' boss, when we just laid awake nights thinkin' up disagreeable things to do to him? Was there ever a time that he'd asked us to do this or that, that every man in reach didn't r'ar up and jump down his throat? He said he'd rather be a nigger rooster on a condemned government steamboat than bear the title of boss of such a rag-chewin', hide-bound set of mules; kick, kick, kick—nothin' but kick, and life wasn't worth livin'.

So then he went behind the shack and pouted.

Well, we liked Hastings, and this made us feel bad—that's the way he worked us.

The Doctor, he fried up a dish of all-sorts in his happiest manner and took it around in a cheerful voice. No. Didn't want no food. Heart was broke. So then we all went and apologized and agreed to keep the ram. Then Hastings recovered and we had that cussed sheep on our hands and feet and all over us.

Well, it was like the devil enterin' a happy home. As for Foxey, he just took one long look at the brute, curlin' and uncurlin' his little tail; then "Hungh!" says he, and blinked his eyes shut, walkin' away from there. I've seen times when I'd liked to been able to use the English of that grunt, to thoroughly acquaint some gentleman of how little I thought of him, but I ain't got the gift of speech. It was an awful call-down—but the sheep, he didn't care. If there *was* such a thing as a foolish Sheeny, that's what a sheep would remind me of.

But the rest of us run into practical and applied trouble in its various branches. There's one night, the Doctor starts for the cabin with a mess of flap-jacks in his hands, and the sheep comes up and pushes him in the pistol pocket so that the Doctor goes sailing into the drink with a stack of brown checks hoverin' all around him.

Then Wind River shows his one tooth and rocks on his heels, hollerin' and laughin', and the sheep rises up and smites him on the hip and thigh so he flew after the Doctor like a gray-whiskered sky-rocket, with a ha-ha! cut in two in the middle. "Woosh!" says old Windy as he comes up. "Hi,

there, cooky! I'll beat you ashore!" He was a handy-witted old Orahanna, that Windy, and you didn't put the kybosh on him easy. So it went with all of us. That ram came out of no-where-at-all another night and patted me on the stummick so I pretty near fainted. I tried to twist his cussed head off his shoulders, but he'd knocked the wind out of me so it was like fightin' an army in a nightmare. I was glad when the boys come out and pried me loose. Oh, oh! How we hated that Jew-nosed, woolly, blaatin' fool of a sheep!

"Well," says Windy, "I'm layin' fur th' day he snaggles himself up with Foxey Bill. You're goin' to see a nice quiet sheep after that happens."

The rest of us had lots of faith in Billy, but we couldn't see where he stood a show to win.

"Shucks!" says Steve. "The sheep'll knock the bacon out of him. The Lord knows I don't want to see it, but that's what's got to happen. Poor Bill ain't onto his style of fightin' at all. You know how pigs make war—standin' side by side, tryin' to hook each other in the flank, gruntin' and circlin' around with little quick steps—how's that goin' to apply to this son-of-a-gun that hits you a welt like a domestic cannon and then chases himself off to the sky-line for another try?"

"Well," cuts in the Doctor, "I ain't a-sayin' *how*, but Bill *docs* him, all the same—bet your life."

"You talk feeble-minded," says Steve. "Nobody'd more like to believe you than me, but the points ain't on the cards. It'll be just like that Braddock's campaign ag'in' the Injuns. There goes the Britishers (that's Bill) amblin' gaily through the woods, dressed

up in red and marchin' arm to arm, for fear some careless Injun would miss 'em, and there's the Injuns (that's that durned ram) off in the woods jumpin' up and down with pleasure and surprise. "Oh, Jimmy!" hollers the Injun to his little boy. "Run get grandpa, Towser, mama, and the baby—everybody's goin' to pick one of these and take it home—no Injun so poor but what he's entitled to at least one Englishman."

"That's all right," says Windy. "But where's your Injun *now*?"

"Well," says Steve, flabbergasted, "that's kind of true, too; he has vanished some."

"I bet you money," says the Doctor, "that Bill does him."

"I hate to rob the poor in mind," says Steve. "And yet I'd like to lose that bet—make it a month's wages?"

"I'm for standin' by my friends," says the Doctor. "I'll bet you up to the first of January."

"Got you," says Steve. "You know where you can borrow chewin', anyhow. Any other gentleman want part of this?"

Steve had money he'd drew out of his poker game uptown, so the rest of us stood not to live high until after January first, if Foxey Bill didn't lick that sheep. We didn't believe he would, still he carried our money.

Well, sir, it was a tough time waitin' for the combat to come off. Bill simply despised the sheep. Couldn't stand near him. The only time he'd stay by the house was when the sheep was off somewheres. And, of course, it was strictly against the rules for any

person to aid, abet, or help either warrior or interfere in any way, shape, or manner.

I was two mile out from camp one day, when I heard "Ke-bang, ke-bang, ke-bangety, bang-bang-bang-bang!" The Doctor was loosin' off all the guns in the shack to once. I hollered to Steve, him to Windy, and then we flew for home, leavin' the calves to their own responsibilities for a while.

The other boys was on hand when we arrived, their faces shinin' with excitement, and yellin' to us for the love of Moses to shake a leg before it was too late.

Poor Billy was pickin' himself up, after rollin' over three times, and the durned ram was prancin' away, wigglin' his tail like little boys does their fingers, with a thumb to the nose.

The Doctor explained to us, whilst we was waitin' for the next jar. "There's Bill," says he, "eatin' his meal out of his half-a-barrel as quiet and decent a citizen as you'll find anywheres. That's his grub and he don't like grass. Well, what must that quar'lsome hunk of horns and mutton do, but try to shove him away from there. Mind you, that ram *does* like grass, and he's got several hundred thousand square mile of it to lunch on—but no, sir! What he must have is a hunk of bread out of Billy's barrel. Now, Billy's no hog—he let's him have the piece of bread—then the ram wants the hull barrel; hoops, staves, and all. That's too hootin' goldarn many for anybody to stand, by ninety-nine per cent, so Bill slams him one. The ram walks off and fetches him a swat like hittin' a side of beef with a fourteen-foot board. Poor old Bill rolls three yards. Then he takes after the brute, but the ram runs away as usual. Billy thinks the fight

is over and goes on with his eatin'. You're just in time to see the end of the second round. Bill's *goin'* to lick him, but cuss me if I see *how*. He can't get *at* that blaatin', skippin' mess of wickedness. He don't understand at all. If the sheep would give him one fair hack, he'd show him—Look! Oh, Lordy! There he goes again! *Damn* that sheep!"

It was an awful sight for Billy's friends to witness. I'll never tell you how many times he went rollin' down the hill, only to come back as game and useless as a rooster fightin' his reflection in a lookin' glass. He'd chase after the sheep, gruntin' fierce, but pshaw! the critter'd simply trot right away from him, wigglin' that insultin' tail in his face. Old Bill's tail was coiled as tight as a watch-spring with rage.

"He'll *do* him," says the Doctor. "He sure *will*! Now you wait!"

"I am waitin'," says Steve, at the end of the twentieth round. "Waitin' and waitin'. The only play that I see Billy makin' is for the sheep to break his neck buntin' him. You hand me that rifle. I'll now bet the crowd there's a dead sheep here in five seconds by the watch. I can't stand this."

But we wouldn't let him cut in. Fair play is fair play.

"Boys," says Wind River soft, "Bill has laid his ropes—I see it in his eye!"

"G'wan!" says Steve. "You see it in your own eye!"

"Well, you watch," says Windy. "Bill and me has been pretty well acquainted ever since that day he called me a liar—look at him now!"

Sure enough, Bill was nosin' his barrel away from

the house. I couldn't see the point exactly, but took it on faith.

He was knocked galley-west and crooked three times before he moved the thing a rod, but whatever he had in his mind he calmly went on with it as soon as he got up.

"Oh, thunder!" says the Doctor. "See him now! Billy, you're an old fool! You'll get butted plumb into the crik, next pass!" For Bill had pushed the barrel to within five foot of the edge of the creek. And when he heard the Doctor talk, I'll take my oath, that pig looked up and smiled.

"He's got him now!" says Wind River. "He's got him now, for all my next year's salary! I see it in his face!"

And Windy was so dead sure he impressed the rest of us. So there's silence, whilst old Foxey Bill is chewin' away in the barrel, and the ram is comin' over the grass—t-r-rmt, t-r-rrmt—as hard as he can paste her, head down and eyes shut. Bill he doesn't see anything either, until there ain't more'n three foot of air between 'em, and then he jumps aside!

"Swoosh!" goes the ram into the water, and Billy straightens out his little curly tail and waves it in the air like a flag. And *holler!* I wisht you could have heard that pig! Nothin' could been more human. "I've got the deady-deady on you, you hook-nosed, slab-sided, second cousin of a government mule!" says he. "Oh! I've got you where I want you and the way I want you, and it's up to you to convert yourself into cash at the earliest opportunity, for you won't be worth much in the market when I'm tired of my fun!" This he says as he gallops to the other side, to head

the sheep off, his mild blue eye on fire. I tell you it's dangerous to rouse up a fat person with a mild blue eye.

A sheep don't swim much better than a mowin' machine, and this feller got desperate—he was for the shore, no matter what broke. And Bill ripped the wool out of him for fair as he tried to scramble up.

"Our fight, Steve," says the Doctor. "I *knew* he'd do him all the time! You throw up the sponge and we'll yank the critter out!"

"Let him drown," says Steve. "I don't like him, hide nor hair—and, besides, think what he's cost me."

But that wouldn't do. Hastings would have looked so mournful, happiness couldn't get along in the same territory with him. So out comes Mr. Ram. Done. Everlastingly done. All in and the cover screwed down. We pointed our fingers at him and did a war-dance around him, sayin': "Agh—*hagh!* You *will*, will you? Now, don't you wish you'd been good!" He hadn't a word to say. And that good old Billy, he comes up and rubs Wind River's legs out from under him just as natural as ever, not set up or swell-headed a bit, like the gentleman he was.

The ram eat his grass and minded his own business from that time on.

THE AMERICANIZING
OF ANDRÉ FRANÇOIS

BY STELLA WYNNE HERRON



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"I WONDER," said Andrew F. Biron, manager of the White Star Mine, to his sister, as he watched, with drawn brows, André François, immaculate in a white flannel suit, bare-kneed and sailor-hatted, go down the street attended by the ministering Angélique, "what Providence had against me when it picked me for the father of Andrew François?"

"He is certainly the strangest child I have ever known," answered his sister irrelevantly, "and I have had experience with a good many—an old maid always does, you know."

"What he needs is to mix up with the other boys—to become Americanized. There is too much European varnish on him. It needs to be rubbed off so that the real boy underneath will show through."

"He needs something," assented his sister shortly, for she had looked with none too gracious an eye upon the advent of André François and his *bonne*, the volatile Angélique. "He thinks of nothing except how he is dressed—a miniature fop! He is now ten years old and he is absolutely helpless. He seems never to have learned to do anything for himself. There is no manliness nor independence in him—nothing but a head full of foolish, old-world notions about what is

due to a gentleman of his standing. As for Angélique, one moment she runs his errands and the next bullies him. Who ever heard of a big boy of ten with a nurse, anyway? Miss Biron stopped a moment to catch her breath, then continued:

"To be frank with you, Andrew, I think you have been little less than criminal to take so little interest in him as to leave him for eight years in an environment of which you knew nothing. You should have had him home immediately after your wife's death, and not have waited until his grandmother died and the responsibility of your son was literally forced upon you."

"The responsibility of his son." All through a busy morning at the office the phrase remained subconsciously in Mr. Biron's mind. At noon hour, when the work slackened up, he set himself to face and thrash it out, for it was his policy to face and thrash out at the first opportunity any difficulty which confronted him.

For half an hour he paced his office, his hands thrust hard down into his pockets, in his mouth a black, unlighted cigar of the stogie species, upon which he chewed with all the concentrated violence which he would have liked to expend upon the problem in hand. His son—how well he remembered the little two-year-old codger, with his serious blue eyes and his fleece of yellow hair, whom he had taken tight in his arms and told not to forget his daddy, as he bid good-by on the steamer to his pretty, pale French wife going back on a visit to her native land.

After her death, little André François had at once found snug quarters in the home of his aristocratic Parisian grandmother, Madame Fouchette, a grand dame of the old régime. She wrote and begged to

keep him. She said he would be placed in a good school—the best, indeed, in France—where, as a rule, none except the sons of noblemen were admitted. Year after year had drifted by, and the busy mine-manager in Colorado, occupied with a thousand and one matters of daily importance, had sent a monthly check of generous figure, together with a quarter-page of hurriedly typewritten, kindly words, accompanied at Christmas, and at what he approximately made out to be André François's birthday, by a great miscellaneous box of toys. He religiously selected these as his wife had advised him to select them on that first Christmas—for he instinctively mistrusted his own judgment in such matters—and varied them only in the matter of quantity, which he increased each year in allowance for the boy's growth.

Perhaps it was because he always pictured him as a tyro of two, unsteady on his legs, principally experimental in his speech, that he was so unprepared for the real André François, the above, plus eight formative years of growth in the French capital, an aristocratic grandmother's idolatry, and the training of a school where, "as a rule, only the sons of noblemen were received."

Mr. Biron recalled with a rueful smile that first meeting with his son and heir. André François, self-possessed, slim, and aristocratic, cultivating already the airs and graces of the young boulevardier, greeted the manager of the White Star with a careful—for he was none too sure of where the accent fell in his mother-tongue—"I am delighted, my father," and kissed him ceremoniously, first on one cheek, then on the other. After which he devoted himself to directing

Angélique—who had been his *bonne* ever since his mother's death and in whose care he had come across the ocean—in the disposal of his four trunks. Madame Fouchette, during her life, had spared neither time nor attention in providing André François with as many new suits and caps as his blue-blooded playmates.

The little raw town of fifteen hundred inhabitants, still half-mining camp, was not prepared for the youthful scion of the Old World, and regarded him as a huge joke.

As for Angélique, in her high heels and infinitesimal aprons, with her coquettish airs and her showers of exclamations, nothing like her had ever been seen, except in an overnight show, where the traditional French maid, between a song and dance, whisked imaginary dust off parlor chairs.

At school André François was under a double disadvantage. In the class-room, he not only knew more than any other boy, but frequently and authoritatively corrected the teacher. In the yard his white flannel sailor suit, with its embroidered anchor and immense soft, red silk bow in front, his jaunty round sailor hat and dainty shoes—it had become the mode in Paris at that time to follow the English style in children's dress—were regarded with derisive and hostile looks by the sturdy blue-and-brown-overalled town boys. Indeed, the little transplanted Parisian, as he stood in line with his fellows, looked very much like a lonely orchid in a bunch of dusty field-flowers.

In the yard André François did not shine. His attitude was marked in the eyes of the indigenous youth by a supercilious stupidity. He neither knew nor cared for baseball, football, or any of the lesser sports which

excite young America at playtime. He had, indeed, at first extended tentative invitations to a chosen few of his classmates to engage in a fencing bout, but, finding that art entirely unknown, he contented himself, during recess, with sitting on the bench and reading from a French book, over the top of which he sometimes stared at his hot, excited schoolmates with insolent superiority.

They returned his contempt with full measure. One and all looked upon André François as a special brand of "Dago"—under which general head they classified all things Latin—protected from their scorn and patriotism by an arbitrary higher power in the form of a father who was a mine manager.

André François, in turn, confided to his father that nobody but ignorant peasants, with whom no gentleman could associate, attended the school.

So matters stood without a change in either direction two weeks after André François's arrival in town. No change of environment seemed strong enough to move him from his accustomed ways of thought. Every morning he started out for school at a quarter of nine, followed by the omnipresent Angélique. Every afternoon he returned at three o'clock, still followed by Angélique.

"Angélique! A nurse! A *bonne!*" As the manager of the White Star thought of her, he nearly bit the cigar, upon which he was chewing, in half. All the militant Americanism in him rose in revolt. He remembered his own bare-footed, swaggering youth, independent as the wind, insolent as a king. And now his son— He stopped short in his pacing and stared wrathfully out into the street, which, like all

the streets of the town, ended abruptly, without any preliminary slopes, in a sheer wall of rock which went up and up and up into a rugged mountain peak.

It chanced that school had just let out for the noon hour, and down the middle of the street, whistling to the full of his lungs, swinging in a circle around his head a long leather strap with a blue calico-covered book at the end for a weight, swaggered a sturdy specimen of young America. Mr. Biron gazed at him with an envious eye and sighed. Then a thought, sudden and sharp, popped into his head. He hesitated for a moment. But why not? Anything was worth trying.

The manager of the White Star was a man of action, so, without wasting further time in debate with himself, he beat a loud tattoo with his knuckles on the window glass. The whistling stopped. He crooked his finger and motioned, and the deed was done. A moment later the ground-glass door opened, and a chunky, red-haired boy, with a belligerent eye, stood expectantly before him. The newcomer placed himself so that the big iron office safe furnished a background for him, and as he stood there with his feet wide apart, his hands in his pockets, he seemed as solidly planted as it. A shaft of noonday sunlight, coming through a side window, struck his hair and made a rubescent halo around his freckled face. The manager of the White Star looked him up and down, and the boy eyed him back look for look. At length Mr. Biron cleared his throat.

"What is your name, my lad?" he asked.

"James Joseph McCarthy," answered the boy, in the same quick, phonographic monotone that he had used

on his first day at school, when the teacher had asked him the same question.

"Ah, yes—do you know my son, Andrew Francis Biron?"

"Sure. Most everybody knows Andray Franswa."

"And what do you think of—er—André François?"

The boy looked at him searchingly. "You oughter know—he's your kid," he said tersely.

"I know what *I* think," said Mr. Biron, "but I want to know what you think. That's what I brought you in for. I want to get some data on the subject."

The boy ran his hand through his hair, and his brow puckered, as he struggled to find a phrase by which to sum up his impression of André François. Then he said:

"Ah, gee—" he made an abortive effort, out of regard for parental feelings, to mitigate the vast contempt in his voice, "he's just a darn sissy."

"Um—I see. Are there any more sissies in town?"

"Nope. Not now. There uster be one onest, about a year ago, but he's all right now. We licked him till he got all right."

"And do you intend to lick André François until he gets all right?"

The scion of the McCarthys looked at him suspiciously for a moment, but seeing in his face rather a desire for honest information than the guile of a parent, he answered:

"Nope. Nobody dast to touch him."

"Why?" asked Mr. Biron with a gleam of hope.

"Would he fight?"

"Who? Him? Him *fight*? I guess *not*. It's cause you're his dad. My dad, he said that if I dast

to lay a finger on Andray Franswa, he'd skin me alive—an' the rest o' the kids, their dads told 'em the same thing."

"I see," said the manager of the White Star, and he saw also that a certain disadvantage went with being the employer of nearly every man in the town.

He took a thoughtful turn around the office, for his conscience gave him a twinge at the critical moment, then stopped abruptly in front of James Joseph and took from his pocket a bright, new silver dollar.

"See this, Jimmie?" he asked, balancing it seductively on the tip of his index finger, "I will give you this, and further, I will see that no complaint is made to your father—if you lick André François."

Each of Jimmie's eyes grew as big and as round as the dollar.

"Sure? D' yer mean it? Gee, that'd be fine. There's goin' to be a circus next week in Briggs's lot, and us fellows is savin' up. Say—is that what you just said on the dead square?"

"On the dead square," said André François's father solemnly.

Jimmie held out his hand for the dollar. "Sure," he said, "I'll lick Andray Franswa. I'll lay low till that crazy Angélique is out of the way. Burbank, the assayer's assistant, is soft on her, and she stops to talk to him every afternoon, an' Andray Franswa walks as far as from school to the assayer's office alone. I'll get him then. I'm boss o' the gang, an' I kin lick fine. Onest I licked a kid an' he wasn't able to be out fer a week."

"Wait," said Mr. Biron, a little alarmed at the enthusiasm he had invoked. "Remember—you are act-

ing under orders, and your orders are not to hurt him. Just roll him around in the mud good and plenty—and, Jimmie, spoil that white sailor suit.”

Jimmie's eyes filled with fellow feeling. For the first time during the interview he and the White Star manager were equals.

“I guess you was a pretty nice kid yourself onest,” he said, “an’ I know how you must feel ’bout Andray Franswa.”

He hesitated a moment, his face twitched with a fierce internal struggle, then he thrust out his arm straight from the shoulder and handed back to Mr. Biron the price of his service.

“I—I’d be glad to do it as a favor,” he said.

“Thank you,” said André François's father gravely, and he took and pocketed the dollar.

As Jimmie was about to leave the office he put out a detaining hand.

“Oh, by the way,” he remarked, with elaborate casuality, “you said something of a circus in Briggs's lot—I can't get away myself, at present, but if you'd take this and go, and let me know if there is anything good, you'd oblige me greatly.”

Jimmie McCarthy left the office of the White Star with his ethics and his honor satisfied, and with a dollar in the pocket of his blue overalls.

Thus was enacted the preliminary part of the plot to Americanize André François, *fils*.

The following afternoon the manger of the White Star sat at his office desk, a file of papers before him. But his attention wavered, and the nearer the clock hands drew to three, the less grew his concentration upon the file. At last the expected happened. The

ground-glass door burst open, and in rushed the immaculate Angélique, her entire person in such dishevelment as the Rue St. Honoré had never seen. Her cap hung by one pin from her black hair, her ruffled swiss apron was under one arm. By the hand she dragged after her the panting André François. His hat was gone, his hair wet, his white sailor suit streaked terra cotta from the clayed mud of the street. His red tie, however, still made a brave flare of color under one ear.

"Father," he said in a high, excited voice, "I have been attacked!"

Angélique motioned him to be quiet.

"Oh, Monsieur Bir-on, oh, sair," she burst out, her round eyes becoming perfect spheres in her excitement, "Monsieur André François have been attack'. I have jus' stop to spik to a gentleman for a so leetle moment—when I look a-r-r-round and zee thees so ter-r-ible boy make the tackle at Monsieur André François's legs. And nex'—O, *ciel!* I zee Monsieur André François high in the air, and then—splash. *Quelle horreur!* down in the depths of the mud pud-dle, and thees boy r-r-rool heem r-round an' r-round an' r-r-round! *Barbare! Sauvage!*" Angélique's voice broke and she buried her face in her abbreviated apron to shut out the memory of a sight so uncivilized.

"Father," said André François, trembling with passion, "you will have him punished at once—publicly, so that every one may know that the indignity has been wiped out?"

"My boy," said Mr. Biron quietly, placing his hand on his son's shoulder, "I am not lord of a feudal princi-

pality. I can not interfere. You will have to fight your own fights."

"But," said André François, angry tears rushing to his eyes, "I can not fight this peasant—I am a gentleman." And he drew himself up with a jerk, in his drabbed sailor suit, to his full three feet eight. This assumption of dignity was not without discomfort, for the muddy water from his over-long hair dripped down his neck in the back and into his eyes in the front.

"Of a certainty," affirmed Angélique with finality, "he is a gentleman. Madame Fouchette so raised heem."

"You will have to settle it your own way, Andrew. If you are too good to fight him, and he is not too good to fight you, I do not see what you can do—except run."

"I will *not* run," cried André François, his voice becoming shrill and childish with impotent rage. "I want him punished."

"I can do nothing for you," said the father shortly. "You had better go home now to your aunt and have your suit changed."

"*Allons,*" said Angélique indignantly, and, catching André François by the hand, she started out. At the door she paused long enough to say devoutly, fixing the so unnatural father with a basilisk glance:

"Dieu vous garde, mon pauvre enfant."

The manager of the White Star even thought he heard a "*Bête!*" as the door closed so decisively that one would almost say it was slammed. All of which the so unnatural parent endured with equanimity, and turned to his delayed files with a patient if dubious smile, for he had begun to do his parental duty as he

saw it, and anything he began, whether it was a lock-out, a new policy, or the training of his son, he saw through to the bitter end.

The next morning, when the White Star manager reached his office—and he got there early, for he began his day's work when his office boy was still comfortably snoring—he found a small boy leaning against the door in the stiff and resigned position of a guard waiting to be relieved from duty. The only parts of him which moved were the toes of his bare legs, and these nimble members dabbled the clayey earth in front of the doorstep.

As soon as this apparition caught sight of Mr. Biron, it straightened up into life.

"Kin I see you, Mr. Biron?" asked the boy eagerly, "on a matter o' business?"

"Certainly," said the manager of the White Star, "just step into the office."

The boy followed him in through the ground-glass door, shifted from one bare foot to the other, cleared his throat, then without further preliminary said:

"Say—d' you want Andray Franswa licked to-day?" Then, fixing him with a bargaining eye, "I'll do it dandy fer seventy-five cents. I kin fight 'most as god as Jimmie—I uster be the biggest kid here before he come an' licked me," he added, with reminiscent pride in a past glory.

Mr. Biron looked at him thoughtfully a moment, then said:

"I engaged Jimmie for the first job, and he did it satisfactorily. I think there may be a tacit contract existing between us that I give him, at least, the refusal of the rest."

"Nope," said the boy. "Jimmie, he ain't no pig. He told the bunch, 'You fellers go 'round an' see if yer kin git nuf for the circus what's comin'.' I bin waitin' a long time so's to be early nuf."

"I see," said Mr. Biron, "Jimmie does not believe in monopolies. He is a despot, but an enlightened one."

"Kin I have the job, then?"

"Very well," said Mr. Biron, "I engage you to lick André François—but with this reservation—mind you do not hurt him, and I will pay you the standard rate of one dollar for a first-class job."

This was the first but not the last of the manager's visitors. It was Saturday, and that whole morning the office of the White Star was besieged by applicants for a "job." Mr. Biron had his pick of the entire bellicose population of the town between the ages of nine and thirteen, and several more nefarious bargains were secretly struck in the shadow of the big iron safe, behind the discreet ground-glass door of the White Star office.

That afternoon Mr. Biron found it difficult to concentrate on the work before him, for, reasoning from cause to effect, and having produced the cause, he was subconsciously expectant of another visit from André and Angélique. Nothing, however, occurred to disturb him and, as he closed up his desk and safe, preparatory to leaving, he smiled grimly to himself.

"I never was stumped by a proposition yet," he muttered half aloud, as he walked home in the sunset, "and André François isn't going to be the first. He *must* have some red blood in his veins—his grand-

father fought at Gettysburg, and I could fight my weight in wildcats at his age."

As he ate his dinner, half an hour later, his sister recounted to him the events of the day.

"Andrew Francis was attacked again," she said, casually nodding toward André François, who ate in silence—for she was a woman of sense. "He came home again covered with mud from head to foot. Angélique says he refused to run and she could do nothing—"

"But no," interrupted the *bonne* eagerly, and her words came like a string of firecrackers exploded by a small boy on the Fourth of July, "he came with a quickness—like *zat!*" and she clapped her hands. "Before I know, he have come behin' and trip Monsieur André François up from his legs. Zen I try to grab thees boy, but he is of a so great slipperiness as an eel! He have hit Monsieur André François—*whack!* He have poke heem an' make heem to fall into the mud. Zen he is away with a quickness—*zipp!* No person is of a similar quickness to catch heem."

During this display of wordy pyrotechnics the son and heir of the house sat in sullen silence and broke his bread into small pieces. When it ended, he suddenly looked up.

"Father," he said, "I do not want Angélique to take me to school any longer. She is a fool."

"Sank you, sair," said the lady referred to, sarcastically, "you have a great gratitude when I protec' your life." Then she turned to the manager of the White Star:

"Sair, I have the pleasure to inform you of something. In one month I am about to marry myself to

Mr. Burbank—he who makes known what is in the rocks.”

“Kind of sudden, wasn’t it, Angélique?” asked Mr. Biron.

“It was of a suddenness,” said Angélique blushing. “I was greatly of a desire to go back to France, but I could not, an’ the nex’ bes’ zing—zat is to marry myself. I mus’ have a protector in thees so savage land where even the children are bloodthirsty. I am not of a nervousness to stan’ everyting. *Voilà!*”

The next morning André François went to school minus his familiar. During the week and a half that followed he was “attacked” with startling frequency and regularity. Almost every afternoon he came home with his clothes muddy and torn.

He was grimly silent about the details of these mishaps.

Angélique was in despair.

“Ah, Madame,” she said to Miss Biron, “in one short month he will not have a stitch to wear—out of the largesse of four trunks full. And the las’ command of Madame Fouchette, it was ‘Angélique, always make Monsieur André François to look like the little prince.’ *Ciel!* how can one make heem to look like the little prince when thees so savage boys tear off his clothes? But I do my ver’ bes’—I darn and darn and darn heem.”

André François made no one his confidant, but day by day he grew more somber and silent. His early garrulity was quite gone. Instead of the air of hauteur which characterized him on his entrance to the town, he now had a pathetic droop. He even became careless about his clothes.

"He used to be so proud, so debonair," said Angélique sadly, "when he have the clean, white suit on, he is like the peacock, he know he is beautiful—but now—he does not care what he have on. No!"

"What can be the matter?" asked Miss Biron anxiously, for she was really worried by André François's looks; "he has never been seriously hurt in these little schoolboy fights."

"*Eh, bien!* Madame! Is it not of a seriousness to be wound' in the pride? To be insult'? Monsieur André François has been made the gross insult many times. Those insult, they know heem in his heart. He zink. He zink all the time now. He zink of those many insult'! Some day he will have his revenge—ment—you see."

About this time the manger of the White Star noticed a falling off in the number of applicants for his peculiar variety of "job." There was a slump in the André François market. One morning he called in a youngster whom he saw going early to school, stated his terms, and made his usual proposal. The boy hesitated a few moments, then said:

"It'll cost yer a dollar an' a quarter now, Mr. Biron. Yer see, 'tain't so easy as 'twas at first. 'Course Andray Franswa never runs, an' it's easy t' git him, but he's growin' awful savage. He kicks an' bites somethin' fierce, sir. He nearly chewed Harry Peters's finger offer him day 'fore yesterday."

The manager paid the extra quarter without any demur.

It was about this time also that Mr. Biron made a discovery which gratified him. He found, secreted under a pillow in the window-seat where André Fran-

çois usually sat, a dusty, copiously diagrammed book entitled "The Manly Art of Self-Defense." It was an edition of twenty years ago, and had been used by Mr. Biron himself during his college days.

He put it back carefully and held his silence.

The following evening he proceeded in an experimental, roundabout way to get into a conversation with his son.

"Andrew," he said, with sociable casualness, to his heir, who now always ensconced himself in the window-seat directly after dinner, and kept a moody silence until Angélique took him off to bed, "you have never told me about your schooldays in France."

Accepting this remark as the statement of an irrefutable fact, André François merely remained politely silent.

"What do you do for recreation? What sport do you have now, for instance?"

"We fence, father," said André François, listlessly.

"Ah, yes," said the White Star manager, introducing his subject in as elaborately casual a way as a politician about to ask for a favor, "just so. Well, you see we don't do much fencing in America, not very much. Boxing, now, is more in our line."

A gleam of interest, which was not lost upon his father, shot into André François's weary eyes.

"Father," he asked timidly, "are you familiar with the manly art of self-defense?"

"I am, my son," answered the manager of the White Star gravely.

André François gazed at him questioningly a moment, then drew the manual from under the sofa cushion.

"I have been practising some of the things described in this book," he said, slowly opening it and disclosing diagrams of a heavy-muscled individual executing a wonderful curve along a dotted line marked "a——a——a," "but I am unable to make out the explanations attached to most of these figures. If you could show me the rudiments—" he finished tentatively.

It was at this point that the manager of the White Star joyously threw diplomacy to the winds.

"You bet I will," he cried enthusiastically, "we will have our first lesson to-night in the attic," and grasping his son's arm he started off.

Miss Biron and Angélique, sedately sewing by the fire in the next room, were electrified to see, a moment later, the manager of the White Star and André François rush madly through, banging a door at either end in their flight, and laughing at the top of their voices. They also stayed awake that night beyond their usual retiring time, for strange noises emanated from the attic long after the hour when a well-conducted father and son should have been in bed.

The next morning the manager of the White Star let the applicant in waiting know that no further business would be transacted, and the word went forth among the members of the gang that he would pay for no more André François lickings, and would tolerate no unpaid-for ones.

So, by the ultimatum of his father, André François went whither he would, unmolested except by word of mouth. But he underwent such martyrdom as only a small boy can receive at the hands of others of his kind.

Not only did the gang remember and resent his

former attitude of superiority, but they looked on him as a source of revenue taken from them. His presence irritated them as the presence of a government-owned railroad might irritate a company of magnates shorn of their profits. His first position had been marked at least by a certain uniqueness and dignity. He *had* never been licked, even if he could have been.

Now, however, he was one of the lowest of the low. In the democracy of the gang, where might was right, he was a pariah, a proven coward, licked by each and every member, and ought, by the law of the survival of the fittest, to be kicked out. He was only allowed to intrude his presence on sufferance, because a higher power artificially protected him.

At recess, in school, he sat on the well-worn bench that ran around the yard and watched the others play or fight. No one ever spoke to him, except now and then to throw a taunt his way.

"Where's nursie, Annie?"

"Hello, sissy—are yer lost?"

"Where'd yer git that suit?" and similar personalities greeted him when one of the boys chanced to notice his presence. Sometimes, as he walked home, pebbles and bits of hardened mud were sent ricochetting after him, but this was the extent of any assault, for the manager of the White Star, sitting behind his ground-glass door, had it within his power to speak a potent word to the father of any boy who disobeyed him.

André François seldom spoke back, but his silence had something grim in it, and there was a portentous light in his eye.

At home he never complained, and Angélique, re-

joiced that the régime of physical violence was over, snatched the time between stitches on a wonderful, beruffled trousseau, to make him "look like the little prince." Only his father knew how he spent his time every evening in the attic, and what passionate energy he put into his work. Neither alluded to it, but both knew that the lessons had an ultimate object.

And, one day, three weeks from the time he took his first boxing lesson, this object was unexpectedly accomplished.

It was a Saturday afternoon, and the gang, freed from the tyranny of school and the irritation of Saturday morning chores, were joyously disporting themselves in a vacant lot at the corner of the street. The first inning of a baseball game was just over, and the overalled players were lying on the ground disputing certain fine points of the play with the audience.

André François stopped, leaned on the top rail of the fence, and gazed at them a trifle wistfully. Jimmie McCarthy's roving eye discovered him, and he yelled out:

"You'd better run along, Annie—nursie will be out lookin' fer yer in a minnut."

The gang laughed flatteringly at the subtle wit of their leader. André François' face flushed a vivid crimson and his eyes darkened. Then he electrified the gang by leaping over the fence and rushing straight up to the redoubtable Jimmie.

He thrust out his chin and yelled up into the face of the surprised leader: (

"I'll show you if I'm an Annie or not. D' you want to fight?"

Jimmie stood dumb with amazement a moment,

then he laughed long and loud, for his sense of humor was Irish; and the whole gang joined in.

"S-a-a-y," he said, "yer want'er git licked again, d'yer? You must'er got inter the habit. I tell yer what—I got a baby brother two years old ter home. I'll go fetch him, and the two o' yez kin have it out."

It was here that André François's early training enabled him to make an impression. He stood up on his toes, as he had once seen the Marquis de Boissé stand up on his toes, and slapped Jimmie McCarthy across the mouth with his open palm, as he had seen that noble marquis slap a count of France.

But what followed was not an exchange of ultra-courteous priorities to a duel. It was a good American fight in the middle of a ring of small boys, and what happened is what always happens when natural and scientific force stand up before each other. That fight will be long remembered in the annals of the gang, which, like the records of the great Homeric fights or the sagas of the primitive Northmen, are first handed down by word of mouth.

"I wished yer'd seen it, kid," said Charlie Brown, to his wide-eyed, freckled-faced junior, whom he was trying to bring up in the right way. "It'd bin an eddycation fer yer. Andray Franswa jumped round jest like he was made o' rubber. Every time that Jim grabbed fer him, he was on the other side an' had landed him one on the nose. Gee, yer oughter seen it bleed—it was worse'n the time Jim beat Buck Paxell. Now, Teddy, yer want ter keep yer eye on Andray Franswa, an' do same as yer see him doin'—'cause he's goin' ter be a great man some day like Jim Jeffries—see?"

That afternoon the manager of the White Star chanced to look out of his window, and he saw André François, with his white sailor hat, fashioned after that of Prince Edward, set rakishly over one ear, his hands in his pockets, whistling at the top of his lungs, come down the street. His face was muddy and bleeding, a great scratch cut across it from ear to ear, his hair was wild and tangled, but his swagger was that of a conqueror, and he took the middle of the road. An admiring concourse of small boys followed along at a respectful distance.

Mr. Biron smiled to himself. Then he took down his ledger, for he was a careful man of business, and read over a certain page. On it was written fourteen times:

“To Andrew Francis, licking. .\$.1.00”

“Um,” said the manager of the White Star softly at the end of the addition, “fourteen dollars.” Then he took another look out of the window:

“I never made a better bargain in my life.”

THE CREATING OF
A TOP LINE ACT

BY HELEN GREEN



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“**N**OTHING doin’ again to-day?” asked Flossie Collins. Her husband, the other half of the comedy sketch team of Collins & Collins, shut the door of their room, before he replied.

“I got a week in Kansas City in August,” said he, gloomily. “That’s sumpin’.”

“Well, I don’t call it sumpin’, Mr. Collins!” exclaimed Flossie, angrily. “I s’pose you mean to set here till August an’ then jump out there, don’t you? Now, in the future I’ll see the agents. Ef you’d get out mornin’s ’stead of settin’ round playin’ pinochle over in the s’loon, we’d be workin’ now. In the mornin’ is the time to see agents. Nobody but office boys is there afternoons. An’ it was told to me by certain parties that yestidday when you told me you done the rounds you set in a music publisher’s shootin’ craps all day!”

Frank Collins scowled. “Well, I win two dollars,” he returned, peevishly. “Quit hollerin’. You can be heard all over the house.”

“Let ’em hear!” shouted Flossie. She took a pillow from the bed and hurled it furiously at her spouse. “Don’t speak to me!” she went on, adding rather in-

consistently: "What salary did you take for Kansas City?"

"None of your business!" he replied, kicking the pillow viciously. "You can get a new par'ner! I'm sick of fightin'. Good-by."

He was gone before Flossie could think of anything biting to say. She slid off the bed, where she had been sitting, to the floor, burying her head in the remaining pillow.

"Let him go!" she sobbed. "I don't care. Him an' me might's well quit now as any time. He never did think nothin' of me. If he did he wouldn't a held out that two yestidday."

The boarders were going down to dinner. She could hear them joking each other outside in the hall, and the stairs creaking under their feet. "Hello, Frank!" a voice called out.

Flossie got up rapidly, trembling for fear he would go away. Dabbing a little powder over her face, she opened the door.

Frank was standing by the stair rail. "I—I just wanted to ask if you got the key," she faltered, trying not to cry.

The key was in the door, as they both knew. Frank looked foolish. "I'll come in and look for it—honey," said he. "I didn't mean what I said, kid. I'm sorry." Thereupon Collins and Collins made it up, and held a little consultation as to ways and means. They had not worked in five weeks, and Mrs. De Shine, the landlady, had ceased to smile upon them in her erstwhile friendly manner.

"We'd better go down and feed," suggested Frank. "The first table's eating now. If we miss the second

they won't be anything good left, and I think I smell steak."

In the lower hall they met Mrs. De Shine and Fido, her beloved poodle. Moved by policy, Flossie caressed Fido, who snapped at her in the usual way. "Don't rag the dolling, Mis' Collins," said his owner, "Fido's tur'ble pertic'ler who pats him."

There was a distinct chill in her voice. As recently as lunchtime the boss had addressed Flossie by her first name, and she read the handwriting on the wall.

"Come on," whispered Frank. He read it also.

Mrs. De Shine spoke again. "When yuh folks come out, kin'ly step into my room," she remarked; "I'd like a few words."

"Oh, cert'nly," replied Flossie, endeavoring to look as if she wasn't fully aware of what the words would be about.

"What'll I say to her?" Frank was plainly disturbed, as they sat down.

"Oh, wait'll I think. I don't believe I want nothin' to eat. I ain't well," said Flossie, weakly.

But Frank figured that if they were to lose a home he could bear it better on a square meal.

"Slide the steak down to this end, pal," said he, "and chase the bread along. Susy, me'n my wife'll take cawfee, an' hustle up some more potatoes."

"Yessir," answered the slavey, obediently. Then she whispered to Flossie.

"Scuse me, Mis' Collins," she said, "but I hearn the boss sayin' she wouldn't wait no longer. I ain't buttin' in, but I thought you'd like to know."

"You're a good gell, Susy, an' I appreciate it," re-

turned Flossie, in the same confidential tone. "Do yuh s'pose they'se any use handin' her a talk?"

"My, she's pie," said Susy, with a snicker; "just con her along, that's all." Flossie breathed easier. She even ate a little, but a foreboding of evil sat heavily upon her mind. "You tell her we got twenty weeks' work, beginning in a week," she said to Frank. "Mebbe we kin stall her off for a week."

"Leave it to me. I'm the fixin' kid," said he. The Property Man, the only boarder who stayed the year around, had finished his dinner excepting a second cup of coffee, and he now engaged in general conversation. "Where do you go from here?" he asked Irma Bender, the contortionist.

"Goin' on the Melville Park Circuit," said she. "He's a per'fly grand fella to work for, too. I was treated swell last season."

Leona Wilbur, who had an act with her "pickaninies," all a long way over seven, reached a long arm in Flossie's direction in search of the sugar.

"I was in Norris's to-day and I seen the Four Juggling Skillets," she observed. "They was tellin' me that you got eight weeks 'round New York on the same bills with them. Take my tip, my dear, an' don't tell nothing to Pansy Skillet you don't want gabbed to the hull profession. She's a natural born knocker, an' I'd say it to her face."

"Eight weeks—why, I don't know what—I mean a'course—" Flossie had stopped in time to conceal her wonder. What did Pansy Skillet mean by saying that to Leona? Miss Wilbur attacked one of Mrs. De Shine's famous home-pickled beets, known to all vaudeville.

"I wisht we had eight weeks around here," said Mirabelle Browning, of the Musical Brownings, with a wistful glance. Mrs. De Shine had entered with Fido. Flossie took a chance.

"We got eight here, and twelve solid weeks on the parks!" she exclaimed boldly, "beginning next week! We held out for our salary, too, an' got it. We never could see this taking less money in the off season!"

"Well, you got a good man bookin' the act," remarked John Kutupp, late comedian in a burlesque troupe, "that's the answer, every time." Mrs. De Shine assumed a pleasant smile. It would be folly to antagonize a team with such brilliant prospects ahead. She promptly made up a new book of the affair. "Susy, Mis' Collins ain't had no meat at all!" she began. "G'wan out an' ast the cook fur a real tender piece fur her. Mista Collins, is they anything yuh want? Say the word. Maggie De Shine was never stingy, an' it's well knowed that I set things on this here table yuh can't get nowhere else."

"That's no lie," murmured the Property Man, "it's sure the limit."

"Did yuh speak, Mister Johnson?" queried the boss sharply. The Property Man said he had been simply agreeing with her statement. Frank kicked his wife, under the table. "Keep it up, kid," said he.

"I could go against a nice dish of strawberries, if you got any lyin' around loose, Mis' De Shine," he said, aloud, "and Flossie loves 'em, don't you, Floss?"

"I cert'nly do." Flossie felt with Frank that they might as well get all they could under the improved conditions. The boss had made her bluff, and now

she was in for it. Strawberries for two meant a supply for the other boarders as well.

"Listen, here. S'pose now I put yuh folks in numba twenty, fur the same price," she began, "an' let the berries go. I didn't see no good ones, anyway, tuh-day, but the dear knows I never make no brag I don't make good on—soot yerselves."

"Tell you what," answered Frank, "we'll just take a whole soot of rooms. You got the three with the bath the Great Allegetti had when he was playin' Mactor's—an' we kin afford 'em now. I b'lieve in bein' comfortable."

Flossie gasped at the extent of his nerve, but Mrs. De Shine was impressed. Her manner seemed to change and a respect that hitherto had been lacking took the place of her former arrogant air. The boarders buzzed among themselves. The Collinses were flying high, evidently. "Yuh couldn't find nothin' better at the San't Wreckus Hotel itself," said Mrs. De Shine, affably, "an' I just want tuh say right here, I appreciate yuh stayin' here with me, same as when yuh was doin twelve shows a day in a Third Avenoo dump. Ef all vodeville people was the same, an' remembered them what stuck by 'em before they rose, I'd have a Broadway hotel."

The landlady was overcome by emotion. With a corner of her apron she wiped a tear away, at the same time keeping tab on the copious amount of butter to which an acrobat at one end helped himself.

"Kin'ly rec'lect that butter cost money, Johnny Twister," she added, "an' some folks better settle what they owe before gorgin' on the fat of the land!"

"Yes'm," murmured Mr. Twister, unabashed, bolt-

ing a large potato whole in his haste to depart before she said more.

"Yuh'll have them berries for breakfast an' Susy'll take it up," she told Flossie, privately; "anything yuh feel like, ast fur it. Them rooms'll be got ready in ten minutes, my dear."

Collins & Collins went upstairs.

"I guess that was poor!" Frank sat on their one trunk chortling merrily. Flossie cast aside all care.

"It'll do for a few days," she observed, "an' we might get some work by then. But won't she be lookin' for our names on the bills?"

"We'll say we took the place of a team that was canceled," Frank assured her; "that's easy. We got her goin' now, an' let's make it strong. But I can't see where that dame got her twelve weeks idee."

A soft knock interrupted him. It was Leona Wilbur. She carried a white satin blouse, which she was in process of beautifying for the adornment of one of her robust "picks."

"Lock the door," she whispered. "Say, you done fine. Didn't you ketch on to why I was making that crack?"

The Collinses begged Leona to go on.

"The Juggling Skillets ain't no friends to any of us," she commenced. "Tuh-day I met 'em like I said. I was up there after three weeks' work, and I got it, and I'm satisfied, because, thank Gawd, I kin make good wherever they put me on a bill. The Skillets come out of the private office, and Pansy Skillet begins hollerin' how they got twelve weeks, and it's too bad I didn't have a good 'nough act to get more dates.

She's a cat! Then I seen you goin' in, Frank, and the boss says, 'Nothing to-day, but call again.'

"I got to thinking about them blamed Skillets, an' goes back, and the clerk tells me all they got is four weeks in Ohio, on the dime vodeville circuit! See how they lie."

"I don't see how we come in," commented Flossie.

"The Skillets are livin' here," replied Leona, triumphantly. "They was at the first table to-night, or you'd seen 'em. I said that about you so's to make the hull gang good an' sore 'cause they'll think you got the choice time, an' their big turn couldn't. See? Anyway, it done you good, at that. I won't breathe it, an' old De Shine fell."

Susy arrived with the tidings that the rooms were ready. The pleased slavey congratulated her friends, little suspecting on what thin ice they were traveling. "Mis' De Shine run out an' bought a silk quilt!" she announced, "an' she tuck the curtains outer the Juglin' Skillets' rooms. They're away playin' their show. Say, Mis' Collins, did yuh ever feel the need of a maid? Seems like yuh oughter have a dresser, playin' them swell dates."

Flossie promised Susy she would reflect upon the advisability of having a retainer. Leona assisted her friends in moving. She was fond of them both and their troubles were fully known to her. She left to play her own show, thinking deeply. It seemed as though a plan for their further relief was lurking in her mind, but she could not quite figure it out. In the liveliest part of her own turn, with the audience roaring at the antics of the loggy black "picks," engaged in a spirited buck dancing finish, Leona found

the way out. She hardly waited to take her three bows, and left half her makeup on in her hurry to get back to the house.

"De Shine's liable to be astin' to see your contracts," she exclaimed, bursting in upon the Collinses, now elegantly quartered in the suite which only high-salaried headliners and managers ever occupied, "and I bet anything we kin show 'em on the level!"

"How? Fake 'em?" asked Frank, eagerly. He had manufactured them before this.

"Agents'll go on overlooking a team for years," said Leona, earnestly; "but if the team goes across to London and makes good then the agents here go crazy over 'em. I got all the European contracts I had up to 1908, that I ain't goin' to play, 'cause they ain't for 'nough money. We kin put Collins & Collins after Leona Wilbur, by squeezin' it in, boost the twenty pounds salary to a hundred and twenty, and that ought to look pretty sweet."

"But we ain't all workin' together," objected Frank.

Flossie silenced him.

"You'd go to work with anybody if you got anything fur it, wouldn't you?" she demanded. "G'wan, Leona!"

"We kin lump the two acts!" cried Leona, warming to the subject. "We go up, flash them contracts, and if we don't get a chance to stick on this side I'm off my nut, an' it's set on pretty steady. Your trunk scenery'll do. We use the same drop, put ten minutes to the act, and in the place in your act where he thinks you're the woman what wants to buy a piano and you think he's the manager of the show come to rehearse you, me and the 'picks' comes in, does our stuff,

you finish the comedy, and we all do a dancin' finish."

Frank rose. "Leona, you're an ace!" said he. "Get the contracts! Leave that to me. I'll be on the job at eight in the morning, an' you gals stay home and dope out what to cut. I got some new stuff that'll be a knockout, too. Say, I feel like a new man!"

"We only got to keep our nerve up," said Flossie. "These rooms seem to gimme a hunch we're goin' to land yet!" Leona examined the silk quilt admiringly.

"Mebbe we'll be sleeping under this kind every day before long," she remarked. "It'll take them Skillets down a coupla pegs, all right."

The ladies helped Frank array himself in the morning. His street clothes were in bad shape, so his stage wardrobe was investigated. A natty light gray suit, patent leather shoes, with gray tops and a straw hat completed his outfit. A somewhat loud patterned shirt and a neat bow tie fixed him nicely.

The breakfast, with strawberries, came up at an early hour, borne by Susy. She reported that the whole house was gossiping at the luxury of Collins & Collins. Leona went down to breakfast where she listened delightedly to the grouchy comments of the Juggling Skillets and other envious performers.

Luckily Frank met the most important agent of all as he got into the elevator to ride to his office. It was not easy to get away when the visitor had caught him. In his own office the agent had many ways of eluding the most determined pursuit. "I'll probably have a

park date very soon, old man," said the agent, "but nothing right now."

"Oh, I only got two weeks open," returned Frank, carelessly. "Better take us off the list, because we sail with the big act in two weeks, you know. Just got our English and German contracts."

The agent regarded him intently. So little attention had he paid to Frank on former visits, that he began to wonder what the fellow meant.

"Big act!" he repeated, as they got out at his floor, "what big act? Thought you did a comedy sketch with somebody?"

He noted Frank's clothes. "Front" goes a long way, and the stage suit had been well kept by the industrious Flossie. It might be possible that he had overlooked something.

"Used to." Frank did his best to convey the impression that he was perfectly at ease. "But, of course, when Leona Wilbur went with us we put in new features. Six people now. I got a little time out West"—he thought of the Kansas City week—"but we'll cancel. Well, good day!"

"Stop! Come in and have a smoke," insisted the agent. He felt puzzled. "Let's see your contracts. Want to be careful of those Johns on the other side. They're not like we are."

Nonchalantly Frank produced the papers. He felt a wild desire to peep at them first to see if the changes still stood the white light of day. His heart pounded as the agent perused them.

"Six hundred dollars!" he said at last, looking up. "Holy Moses! Who got you that price?"

Frank smiled wisely. "It ain't hard when you got

the goods," he returned. "We had to get it from over there, too. I never had no decent money handed me here."

"How about seeing this act?" asked the agent abruptly.

"I couldn't say till I see the ladies," said Frank, guardedly. "We're stoppin' on Fourteenth street. I'll go down and ask 'em about it."

The agent made up his mind to find out what the act was.

"I'll call," said he.

Frank raced home. Hurriedly the ladies strewed knickknacks about their smart apartments to make it look homelike. When the agent got there one look convinced him that the contracts were on the level. Vaudeville people could never keep up such style on small money. He made up his mind that these persons should come under his sheltering booking wing, if only because they appeared to have no desire to do so. It was almost a matter of personal pride. Four days later on a certain stage he saw a dress rehearsal of Collins, Wilbur & Collins and their Ethiopian wonders.

The company worked with such dash and vim that he viewed their act approvingly. It appealed to him. Agents are but human after all. He began to feel a friendly interest in the talented group.

"Look here; you stay over here," he said at the finish. "You've got a nice little act. Six hundred's all right in Europe, but it's a hard game. They cut your time down and crab a good turn, and the country's an awful thing. Now I'll get you four hundred a week here and give you ten weeks around New

York, eight more in the East and six on the Morpheum Circuit, West. You can't beat that. Yes or no?"

"Yes!" shouted the trio.

"Then come up and sign," said he, "and I'll buy lunch for the bunch—all except the 'picks.' "

Collins, Wilbur & Collins are topping bills now. It's all in the way you go about it.

LETTER OF A JAPANESE
SCHOOLBOY

BY HASHIMURA TOGO (WALLACE IRWIN)



LETTER OF A JAPANESE SCHOOLBOY

BY HASHIMURA TOGO (WALLACE IRWIN)

TO Editor COLLIER's who must come out regular as possible & include shocking reports about weddings, funerals, base-balls & Inaugurations, no matter how frequently them events happens,

DEAREST SIR :

MY COUSIN NOGI, who I frequently meet up with at Sons of Nagasaki Billiard & Pools to play it, enjoy showing me how-do to make that game with a poke-stick. He are very kind to teach me this, because he can win 5c out from me eech time until I am flatly impoverished & care to stop doing so.

But yesterday he would not. He prefer setting at his room reading some print from newspaper & looking intelligent. By peeking through Nogi's shoulder I seen something very important in this print—America have at last traded off Hon. Roosevelt for Hon. Taft, and I almost missed it! This newspaper have portraits of both them famous Kings all over it with mottos "PUSH OFF THE OLD, PULL ON THE NEW!" Another portrait of Hon. Taft entitled, "The Rising Son of O-Hio." Portraits of

prominent persons present. Portrait of Senator Foraker removing the Orphan Harpoon from his neck. Portrait of Congress enquiring, "Why Africa? There is no better hunting in the world than here in Washington." Portrait of O-Hio dragoons, Annyappolis cadets, music-wagons full of Party Harmonies, portraits of pretty politickal schoolmams attempting to surround the White House with Hobson expressions, portrait of Inaugural Ballet composed of 46 Beautiful Men from 46 States, portrait of Capitol Bilding decorated with blue flags, portrait of the Treasury Bilding decorated with red tape, portrait of 40 foreign ambassadors in coronation costumes trimmed with real point lace, portrait of prominent Filipinos, Porto Ricans and Pennsylvanians followed by the Boosters' Club & Philander P. Knocks. Finally there is a splandid portrait of 7 complete Chief Justuses in front of the Capitol getting ready to swear.

"Chief Justus Fuller," say Nogi from newspaper, "are now champeen swearer of Washington."

"Thought-so that Hon. Ben. Tillman was most famous for this artistick talent," I rejoin with voice of deep shock.

"Hon. Tillman do-so differently," snuggest Nogi. "He are famous for cursing Presidents out; but Hon. Justus Fuller are celebrated for swearing them in."

"Do it give you awes to look at this hero?" I deploy.

"By appearance," report Nogi, "this Hon. Fuller resemble Hon. Mark Twain wearing a black Mother Hubbard and looking like he was going to perform a Injunction or do something legal. It are a awfully sweet & dignified job to be a Chief Justus. All you has to do is to set down on the Supreme Bench and

remain there forever. Chief Justus Fuller arrived in Washington before Jo-Uncle Cannon did—and nobody can remember further back as that. He have sworn-in so many Presidents he have forgotten the names of over $\frac{1}{2}$ of them. He can Inaugurate a President as easy as a Justus of the Peace can marry a pair of Swedes. He can say that Oath of Office backwards in his sleep; he can administer that Oath with his eyes shut & both hands lashed behind him. Inauguration Day are no treat to Hon. Fuller. Morning of Mch 4 he awake with tired yawn & ring for private Secretary. 'Hon. Sec.,' he-say, 'what are on the Calender to day?' 'Mch 4 are on the Calender,' speak-back Hon. Sec. 'Your Highness must arise up & attend to a new President awaiting to be swore.' 'Holy Smudges!' say Hon. C. Justus (which is a Oath he got for private use), 'It seem to me I just finished swearing the last one. Who want to be President this cold morning?' 'It are Hon. Taft's turn to be it,' say that useful man, 'and he would feel hurt if neglected. All ready he are up & dressed attempting to look calm. Entire population of America & New England are eating lunch on the White House lawn, the O-Hio State militia, disguised as Hungarian musicians, is promenading on horseback, all along the line of march, the bisickel squad are beating back the proletariat and Several Senators is riding in open hacks to show their affiliation with the lower classes. Washington are a scene of nearly-royal pump and it are beginning to rain.' 'If it didn't rain on Inauguration Day it would be unconstitutional,' says Chief Justus Fuller with experienced look. So he reverse himself out of bed and begin pulling on his skirts of office."

"Did Hon. Fuller make a President out of Hon. Taft this time?" are next question for me.

"O surely he done!" ollicute Cousin Nogi. "Never since election of C. J. Caesar as Mayor of Rome have a President been so thoroughly inaugurated. Such inspired sight! One Man standing lonesome in granjer, the choice of 80,000,000 people, many of which voted for him. There he stand, the Idle of the Army, the Pride of the Navy, the Adoration of Congress who, with voice of one man, has promised to love, honor & obey him so long as he keep quiet and do not do nothing to make them mad. There he stand on his dignity with both feet, every inch a King—whether you measure him up and down or crosswise. Pretty soonly Chief Justus Fuller advance forwards and begin swearing.

"'Elevate up your right han, please,' commence-he. 'What is your Christian name, if any?'

"'Taft.'

"'Chas. or Wm.?'

"'Wm.' reply Hon. Taft with only slight hesitation.

"'You swear you are a white American citizen over 20 years aged so help me and vaccinated in at least six different languages?'

"'I do!' say Hon. Taft nervusly.

"'You swear you have never been arrested in this county, can read & write and will not feel suprisd if nothing much happens to the Tariff in the next 4 years.

"'I shall feel suprisd at nothing,' relapse Hon. Taft.

"'You swear to follow the Constitution whichever way it jumps?'

"I am doing so!"

"Then take it, my boy, and see what you can do with it," say Hon. Fuller kindly & depart off leaving Hon. Taft facing America with nothing but a speech."

"Were it a good speech?" I ask to know.

"Not sure," say Nogi. "American publick were too far removed from the speaker's throne to hear it. Diplomatick Corpse, who stood as usual in exposed positions, was drawing their pretty uniforms about them to keep away the March drafts & each was sneezing in his native tongue. Ambassador Brice felt peeved because he stood next by Baron Takahira who were sneezing in Japanese which nearly exploded diplomatick relations between them friendly powers. Therefore they get less of them noble utterances. All newspaper-prints this morning has entire sheets full of that speech. It were probably a very fine oratory. A speech couldn't be so long like that & not have some noble promises inside of it. American publick feels kind of undecided about it. They hope to think it was a fine policy for a new President to say, but they got to read that speech carefully & talk it over before they are sure."

"When will they really know for actually?" I require.

"About March 4, 1912," dib Nogi setting his cigarette afire.

Mr. Editor, there are a smell of possum in the White House kitchen to-day & a new face at the East Room window. Able-bodied White Wings is removing the scrap-paper & orange-peels off the streets of Washington and Congress are feeling comfortable

but kind of lonesome. What-say Hon. Rud. Kipling about such sad days as this? He say,

*“The rumpus and the spouting dies,
The Cabinet and King depart;
Behold the Constant Exercise,
The Policies we know by heart—
Great Caesar’s Ghost, they’re with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!!”*

Many wise professors is now asking, “How will Hon. Roosevelt feel to be Private Citizen?” “He will never be a Private Citizen,” are answer for Japanese Schoolboy. He were born a Publick Question and he got to continue so whether he want to or not. What-say Hon. Shakespeare, great bookmaker about this? He-say, “Some men acquire Publicity, some men has it poked at them, but Theodore Roosevelt can’t no more help being Celebrated than a Welch rabbit can help having 4 legs.”

(“Do that Welch mammal contain 4 legs?” require my jay relation, Uncle Nichi, with timid expression of a Nature Fake. I am indifferent to reply.)

Hon. Roosevelt were a famous character almost before he was born. In early school-days he were the brightest boy at the foot of the spelling class. He could not write a Love Letter without it sounded like a Presidential Message. Nothing he does ever becomes invisible to the human ear. Even when he walk in gum-slippers it make a deliciously loud noise. How can a man vanish into the Jungle when every time he shoot a grey squirril it sound like the Shot that was Heard around the World? I require no answer.

Power of President are always elastick; but under President Roosevelt it have got so stretched it will never look the same no more. To be a President in the future a person must trade his stove-pipe hat for an alarm-clock. If a gentleman wish to enjoy a lazy life he had better keep away from the White House and go to the Senate.

It were not thusly in the goodish old days of Geo. Washington. Hon. Washington, when he started America, thought it would run itself. After he had pursued the Brittish entirely off this island he decided to retire in his old age and be a President, because this were easier than going on the Lyceum Lecture platform. This Washington were a lucky man. When he was Chief Executive he didn't need to be nothing but President.

For many years Presidents continued for to be thusly. They was a race of calm gentlemen with nothing on their minds but a stovepipe hat. Only duties required of them were to ride in a hack on Inauguration Day, write a plain business hand, set in the parlor on New Years, declare war and get their pictures on \$1 bills. In them days every American boy wished to be President—and any brite boy could learn the job.

But such dates is now entirely pastime. In them days the Ship of State were a side-wheeler river-boat. To-day the Ship of State are a twin-screw turbine liner quipped with hot and cold water and a wireless apparatus. A man to run such a Ship have got to be a cross between Admiral Evans and Jack Binns. He got to keep his eye on Wall Street, his mind on Panama, and his teeth on Congress. He got to keep

his ear to the ground and his nose to the grindstone. With one hand he must shake the hand of Labor, with the other he must shake the neck of Harriman. He got to be man and muckraker, engineer and acrobat; he must understand navigation, plumbing, international law, child-culture, hypnotism & finance, and he must be a handy man about horses. He got to be more than a President. He got to be a super-President.

In kittycombs of cemetery near Kyoto, Japan, there reside a cheerful stone tomb what got following inscription on its outside:

HERE LIES EMPEROR SUTOMATO

WHO RAINED SUCCESSFULLY

for 440 YEARS

And Died at the Age of 40.

When firstly I seen that epigraf I was filled with vex & say to one holy gentleman what show me this tomb, price 10c,

"So fooly to think!" I snib for scorn. "No respectable King could rule for 440 years and die at the age of 40. I know because I am aware."

"O ha!" say this holy gentleman, "Maybe you are not acquainted with this kind of a King."

"How do you suppose?" are question for me.

"Thusly was," say him. "This Sutomato for 40 years make laws of Japan—that were job for at least one King. During that same 40 years he enforce them laws—that were job for a King and $\frac{1}{2}$. For this same period he boss Art & Literature of Japan—2 more Kings required here. He make War, which

were equivalent of 1 King. He make Peace, which equal a pair of Kings. He arrange Japanese spelling-book—1 King used up by this. He encourage Large Families, which were good job for $\frac{1}{2}$ King at least. And annually for 40 years he call together Governors of Japan and request them to make National Resources into preserves—sufficient work for another pair of Kings here.

“Thusly,” say this holy gentleman, “it were prove by ancient history-man that Hon. Emperor Sutomato were equal to about 11 able-bodied Kings all to onct. Hencewise, 11 Kings ruling 40 years was equal to 1 King ruling 440 years. And if this ain’t true it ought to be so.”

Thusly, Mr. Editor, it are ditto in modern kingdoms. Kings is like Servant Ladies—it is not so important how long they stays as what they does while they are on the job.

Mr. Editor, will Hon. Taft be a similar King like Hon. Roosevelt? Will he be a Chip of the old Stick, or will he be different? Already he have disagreed with Hon. Roosevelt in one important respeck. He have disagreed about Ladies.

Hon. Roosevelt say, “It are blessed to be the mother of at leastly 9 twins.”

But Hon. Taft say, “It are more blessedder to be an Oldmade Schoolmam & teach them 9 twins the sense they wasn’t borned with.”

Both are good ways to know.

Hoping you are the same,

Yours truly,

HASHIMURA TOGO.

THE WOMAN AND
HER BONDS

BY EDWIN LEFEVRE



THE WOMAN AND HER BONDS

BY EDWIN LEFEVRE

IT seemed to Fullerton F. Colwell, of the famous Stock-Exchange house of Wilson & Graves, that he had done his full duty by his friend Harry Hunt. He was a director in a half score of companies—financial *débutantes* which his firm had “brought out” and over whose stock-market destinies he presided. His partners left a great deal to him, and even the clerks in the office ungrudgingly acknowledged that Mr. Colwell was “the hardest worked man in the place, barring none”—an admission that means much to those who know it is always the downtrodden clerks who do all the work and their employers who take all the profit and credit. Possibly the important young men who did all the work in Wilson & Graves’s office bore witness to Mr. Colwell’s industry so cheerfully, because Mr. Colwell was ever inquiring, very courteously, and, above all, sympathetically, into the amount of work each man had to perform, and suggesting, the next moment, that the laborious amount in question was indisputably excessive. Also, it was he who raised salaries; wherefore he was the most charming as well as the busiest man there. Of his partners, John G. Wilson was a consumptive, forever going from one

health resort to another, devoting his millions to the purchase of railroad tickets in the hope of outracing Death. George B. Graves was a dyspeptic, nervous, irritable, and, to boot, penurious; a man whose chief recommendation at the time Wilson formed the firm had been his cheerful willingness to do all the dirty work. Frederick R. Denton was busy in the "Board Room"—the Stock Exchange—all day, executing orders, keeping watch over the market behavior of the stocks in which the firm was identified, and from time to time hearing things not meant for his ears, being the truth regarding Wilson & Graves. But Fullerton F. Colwell had to do everything—in the stock market and in the office. He conducted the manipulation of the Wilson & Graves stocks, took charge of the unnefarious part of the numerous pools formed by the firm's customers—Mr. Graves attending to the other details—and had a hand in the actual management of various corporations. Also, he conferred with a dozen people daily—chiefly "big people," in Wall Street parlance—who were about to "put through" stock-market "deals." He had devoted his time, which was worth thousands, and his brain, which was worth millions, to disentangling his careless friend's affairs, and when it was all over and every claim adjusted, and he had refused the executor's fees to which he was entitled, it was found that poor Harry Hunt's estate not only was free from debt, but consisted of \$38,000 in cash, deposited in the Trolleyman's Trust Company, subject to Mrs. Hunt's order, and drawing interest at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per annum. He had done his work wonderfully well, and, in addition to the cash, the widow owned an

unencumbered house Harry had given her in his lifetime.

Not long after the settlement of the estate Mrs. Hunt called at his office. It was a very busy day. The bears were misbehaving—and misbehaving mightily successfully. Alabama Coal & Iron—the firm's great specialty—was under heavy fire from "Sam" Sharpe's Long Tom as well as from the room-traders' Maxims. All that Colwell could do was to instruct Denton, who was on the ground, to "support" *Ala. C. & I.* sufficiently to discourage the enemy, and not enough to acquire the company's entire capital stock. He was himself at that moment practising that peculiar form of financial dissimulation which amounts to singing blithely at the top of your voice when your beloved sackful of gold has been ripped by bear-paws and the coins are pouring out through the rent. Every quotation was of importance; a half inch of tape might contain an epic of disaster. It was not wise to fail to read every printed character.

"Good morning, Mr. Colwell."

He ceased to pass the tape through his fingers, and turned quickly, almost apprehensively, for a woman's voice was not heard with pleasure at an hour of the day when distractions were undesirable.

"Ah, good morning, Mrs. Hunt," he said, very politely. "I am very glad to see you. And how do you do?"

He shook hands, and led her, a bit ceremoniously, to a huge armchair. His manners endeared him even to the big Wall Street operators, who were chiefly interested in the terse speech of the ticker.

"Of course, you are very well, Mrs. Hunt. Don't tell me you are not."

"Ye-es," hesitatingly. "As well as I can hope to be since—since—"

"Time alone, dear Mrs. Hunt, can help us. You must be very brave. It is what he would have liked."

"Yes, I know," she sighed. "I suppose I must."

There was a silence. He stood by, deferentially sympathetic.

"*Ticky-ticky-ticky-tick,*" said the ticker.

What did it mean, in figures? Reduced to dollars and cents, what did the last three brassy taps say? Perhaps the bears were storming the Alabama Coal & Iron intrenchments of "scaled buying orders"; perhaps Colwell's trusted lieutenant, Fred Denton, had repulsed the enemy. Who was winning? A spasm, as of pain, passed over Mr. Fullerton F. Colwell's grave face. But the next moment he said to her, slightly conscience-strickenly, as if he reproached himself for thinking of the stock market in her presence: "You must not permit yourself to brood, Mrs. Hunt. You know what I thought of Harry, and I need not tell you how glad I shall be to do what I may, for his sake, Mrs. Hunt, and for your own."

"*Ticky-ticky-ticky-tick!*" repeated the ticker.

To avoid listening to the voluble little machine, he went on: "Believe me, Mrs. Hunt, I shall be only too glad to serve you."

"You are so kind, Mr. Colwell," murmured the widow; and after a pause: "I came to see you about that money."

"Yes?"

"They tell me in the trust company that if I leave

the money there without touching it I'll make \$79 a month."

"Let me see; yes; that is about what you may expect."

"Well, Mr. Colwell, I can't live on that. Willie's school costs me \$50, and then there's Edith's clothes," she went on, with an air which implied that as for herself she wouldn't care at all. "You see, he was so indulgent, and they are used to so much. Of course, it's a blessing we have the house; but taxes take up so much; and— isn't there some way of investing the money so it could bring more?"

"I might buy some bonds for you. But for your principal to be absolutely safe at all times, you will have to invest in very high-grade securities, which will return to you about $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. That would mean, let's see, \$110 a month."

"And Harry spent \$10,000 a year," she murmured, complainingly.

"Harry was always—er—rather extravagant."

"Well, I'm glad he enjoyed himself while he lived," she said, quickly. Then, after a pause: "And, Mr. Colwell, if I should get tired of the bonds, could I always get my money back?"

"You could always find a ready market for them. You might sell them for a little more or for a little less than you paid."

"I shouldn't like to sell them," she said, with a business air, "for less than I paid. What would be the sense?"

"You are right, Mrs. Hunt," he said, encouragingly. "It wouldn't be very profitable, would it?"

"*Ticky-ticky-ticky-ticky-ticky-ticky-tick!*" said the

ticker. It was whirring away at a furious rate. Its story is always interesting when it is busy. And Colwell had not looked at the tape in fully five minutes!

"Couldn't you buy something for me, Mr. Colwell, that when I came to sell it I could get more than it cost me?"

"No man can guarantee that, Mrs. Hunt."

"I shouldn't like to lose the little I have," she said, hastily.

"Oh, there is no danger of that. If you will give me a check for \$35,000, leaving \$3,000 with the trust company for emergencies, I shall buy some bonds which I feel reasonably certain will advance in price within a few months."

"*Ticky-ticky-ticky-tick*," interrupted the ticker. In some inexplicable way it seemed to him that the brassy sound had an ominous ring, so he added: "But you will have to let me know promptly, Mrs. Hunt. The stock market, you see, is not a polite institution. It waits for none, not even for your sex."

"Gracious me, must I take the money out of the bank to-day and bring it to you?"

"A check will do." He began to drum on the desk nervously with his fingers, but ceased abruptly as he became aware of it.

"Very well, I'll send it to you to-day. I know you're very busy, so I won't keep you any longer. And you'll buy good, cheap bonds for me?"

"Yes, Mrs. Hunt."

"There's no danger of losing, is there, Mr. Colwell?"

"None whatever. I have bought some for Mrs.

Colwell, and I would not run the slightest risk. You need have no fear about them."

"It's exceedingly kind of you, Mr. Colwell. I am more grateful than I can say. I—I—"

"The way to please me is not to mention it, Mrs. Hunt. I am going to try to make some money for you, so that you can at least double the income from the trust company."

"Thanks, ever so much. Of course, I know you are thoroughly familiar with such things. But I've heard so much about the money everybody loses in Wall Street that I was half afraid."

"Not when you buy good bonds, Mrs. Hunt."

"Good morning, Mr. Colwell."

"Good morning, Mrs. Hunt. Remember, whenever I may be of service you are to let me know immediately."

"Oh, thank you, so much, Mr. Colwell. Good morning."

"Good morning, Mrs. Hunt."

Mrs. Hunt sent him a check for \$35,000, and Colwell bought 100 five-per cent gold bonds of the Manhattan Electric Light, Heat & Power Company, paying 96 for them.

"These bonds," he wrote to her, "will surely advance in price, and when they touch a good figure I shall sell a part, and keep the balance for you as an investment. The operation is partly speculative, but I assure you the money is safe. You will have an opportunity to increase your original capital and your entire funds will then be invested in these same bonds—Manhattan Electric 5s—as many as the money will buy. I hope within six months to secure for you

an income of twice as much as you have been receiving from the trust company."

The next morning she called at his office.

"Good morning, Mrs. Hunt. I trust you are well."

"Good morning, Mr. Colwell. I know I am an awful bother to you, but—"

"You are greatly mistaken, Mrs. Hunt."

"You are very kind. You see, I don't exactly understand about those bonds. I thought you could tell me. I'm so stupid," archly.

"I won't have you prevaricate about yourself, Mrs. Hunt. Now, you gave me \$35,000, didn't you?"

"Yes." Her tone indicated that she granted that much and nothing more.

"Well, I opened an account for you with our firm. You were credited with the amount. I then gave an order to buy one hundred bonds of \$1,000 each. We paid 96 for them."

"I don't follow you quite, Mr. Colwell. I told you"—another arch smile—"I was so stupid!"

"It means that for each \$1,000-bond \$960 was paid. It brought the total up to \$96,000."

"But I only had \$35,000 to begin with. You don't mean I've made that much, do you?"

"Not yet, Mrs. Hunt. You put in \$35,000; that was your margin, you know; and we put in the other \$61,000 and kept the bonds as security. We owe you \$35,000, and you owe us \$61,000, and—"

"But—I know you will laugh at me, Mr. Colwell—but I really can't help thinking it's something like the poor people you read about, who mortgage their houses, and they go on, and the first thing you know some real estate agent owns the house and you have

nothing. I have a friend, Mrs. Stilwell, who lost hers that way," she finished, corroboratively.

"This is not a similar case, exactly. The reason why you use a margin is that you can do much more with the money that way than if you bought outright. It protects your broker against a depreciation in the security purchased, which is all he wants. In this case you theoretically owe us \$61,000, but the bonds are in your name, and they are worth \$96,000, so that if you want to pay us back, all you have to do is to order us to sell the bonds, return the money we have advanced, and keep the balance of your margin; that is, of your original sum."

"I don't understand why I should owe the firm. I shouldn't mind so much owing you, because I know you'd never take advantage of my ignorance of business matters. But I've never met Mr. Wilson nor Mr. Graves. I don't even know how they look."

"But you know me," said Mr. Colwell, with patient courtesy.

"Oh, it isn't that I'm afraid of being cheated, Mr. Colwell," she said hastily and reassuringly; "but I don't wish to be under obligations to any one, particularly utter strangers; though, of course, if you say it is all right, I am satisfied."

"My dear Mrs. Hunt, don't worry about this matter. We bought these bonds at 96. If the price should advance to 110, as I think it will, then you can sell three-fifths for \$66,000, pay us back \$61,000, and keep \$5,000 for emergencies in savings banks drawing 4 per cent interest, and have in addition 40 bonds which will pay you \$2,000 a year."

"That would be lovely. And the bonds are now 96?"

"Yes; you will always find the price in the financial page of the newspapers, where it says BONDS. Look for *Man. Elec. 5s*," and he showed her.

"Oh, thanks ever so much. Of course, I am a great bother, I know—"

"You are nothing of the kind, Mrs. Hunt. I'm only too glad to be of the slightest use to you."

Mr. Colwell, busy with several important deals, did not follow closely the fluctuations in the price of Manhattan Electric Light, Heat & Power Company 5s. The fact that there had been any change at all was made clear to him by Mrs. Hunt. She called a few days after her first visit, with perturbation written large on her face. Also she wore the semi-resolute look of a person who expects to hear unacceptable excuses.

"Good morning, Mr. Colwell."

"How do you do, Mrs. Hunt? Well, I hope."

"Oh, I am well enough. I wish I could say as much for my financial matters." She had acquired the phrase from the financial reports which she had taken to reading religiously every day.

"Why, how is that?"

"They are 95 now," she said, a trifle accusingly.

"Who are *they*, pray, Mrs. Hunt?" in surprise.

"The bonds. I saw it in last night's paper."

Mr. Colwell smiled. Mrs. Hunt almost became indignant at his levity.

"Don't let that worry you, Mrs. Hunt. The bonds are all right. The market is a trifle dull; that's all."

"A friend," she said, very slowly, "who knows all

about Wall Street, told me last night that it made a difference of \$1,000 to me."

"So it does, in a way; that is, if you tried to sell your bonds. But as you are not going to do so until they show you a handsome profit, you need not worry. Don't be concerned about the matter, I beg of you. When the time comes for you to sell the bonds I'll let you know. Never mind if the price goes off a point or two. You are amply protected. Even if there should be a panic I'll see that you are not sold out, no matter how low the price goes. You are not to worry about it; in fact, you are not to think about it at all."

"Oh, thanks ever so much, Mr. Colwell. I didn't sleep a wink last night. But I knew—"

A clerk came in with some stock certificates and stopped short. He wanted Mr. Colwell's signature in a hurry, and at the same time dared not interrupt. Mrs. Hunt thereupon rose and said: "Well, I won't take up any more of your time. Good morning, Mr. Colwell. Thanks ever so much."

"Don't mention it, Mrs. Hunt. Good morning. You are going to do very well with those bonds if you only have patience."

"Oh, I'll be patient now that I know all about it; yes, indeed. And I hope your prophecy will be fulfilled. Good morning, Mr. Colwell."

Little by little the bonds continued to decline. The syndicate in charge was not ready to move them. But Mrs. Hunt's unnamed friend—her Cousin Emily's husband—who was employed in an uptown bank, did not know all the particulars of that deal. He knew the Street in the abstract, and had accordingly implanted

the seed of insomnia in her quaking soul. Then, as he saw values decline, he did his best to make the seed grow, fertilizing a naturally rich soil with ominous hints and head-shakings and with phrases that made her firmly believe he was gradually and considerably preparing for the worst. On the third day of her agony Mrs. Hunt walked into Colwell's office. Her face was pale and she looked distressed. Mr. Colwell sighed involuntarily—a scarcely perceptible and not very impolite sigh—and said: "Good morning, Mrs. Hunt."

She nodded gravely and, with a little gasp, said, tremulously: "The bonds!"

"Yes? What about them?"

She gasped again, and said: "The p-p-pa-pers!"

"What do you mean, Mrs. Hunt?"

She dropped into a chair nervelessly, as if exhausted. After a pause she said: "It's in all the papers. I thought the "Herald" might be mistaken, so I bought the "Tribune" and the "Times" and the "Sun." But no. It was the same in all. It was," she added, tragically, "93!"

"Yes?" he said, smilingly.

The smile did not reassure her; it irritated her and aroused her suspicions. By him, of all men, should her insomnia be deemed no laughing matter.

"Doesn't that mean a loss of \$3,000?" she asked. There was a deny-it-if-you-dare inflection in her voice of which she was not conscious. Her cousin's husband had been a careful gardener.

"No, because you are not going to sell your bonds at 93, but at 110, or thereabouts."

"But if I did want to sell the bonds now, wouldn't

"I lose \$3,000?" she queried, challengingly. Then she hastened to answer herself: "Of course I would, Mr. Colwell. Even I can tell that."

"You certainly would, Mrs. Hunt; but—"

"I knew I was right," with irrepressible triumph.

"But you are not going to sell the bonds."

"Of course, I don't want to, because I can't afford to lose any money, much less \$3,000. But I don't see how I can help losing it. I was warned from the first," she said, as if that made it worse. "I certainly had no business to risk my all."

She had waived the right to blame some one else, and there was something consciously just and judicial about her attitude that was eloquent. Mr. Colwell was moved by it.

"You can have your money back, Mrs. Hunt, if you wish it," he told her, quite unprofessionally. "You seem to worry about it so much."

"Oh, I am not worrying, exactly; only, I do wish I hadn't bought—I mean, the money was so safe in the Trolleyman's Trust Company, that I can't help thinking I might just as well have let it stay where it was, even if it didn't bring me in so much. But, of course, if you want me to leave it here," she said, very slowly to give him every opportunity to contradict her, "of course, I'll do just as you say."

"My dear Mrs. Hunt," Colwell said, very politely, "my only desire is to please you and to help you. When you buy bonds you must be prepared to be patient. It may take months before you will be able to sell yours at a profit, and I don't know how low the price will go in the mean time. Nobody can tell you that, because nobody knows. But it need make no dif-

ference to you whether the bonds go to 90, or even to 85, which is unlikely."

"Why, how can you say so, Mr. Colwell? If the bonds go to 90, I'll lose \$6,000—my friend said it was one thousand for every number down. And at 85 that would be"—counting on her fingers—"eleven numbers, that is, *eleven—thousand—dollars!*" And she gazed at him, awe-strickenly, reproachfully. "How *can* you say it would make no difference, Mr. Colwell?"

Mr. Colwell fiercely hated the unnamed "friend," who had told her so little and yet so much. But he said to her, mildly: "I thought that I had explained all that to you. It might hurt a weak speculator if the bonds declined ten points, though such a decline is utterly improbable. But it won't affect you in the slightest, since, having an ample margin, you would not be forced to sell. You would simply hold on until the price rose again. Let me illustrate. Supposing your house cost \$10,000, and—"

"Harry paid \$32,000," she said, correctingly. On second thought she smiled, in order to let him see that she knew her interpolation was irrelevant. But he might as well know the actual cost.

"Very well," he said, good-humoredly, "we'll say \$32,000, which was also the price of every other house in that block. And suppose that, owing to some accident, or for any reason whatever, nobody could be found to pay more than \$25,000 for one of the houses, and three or four of your neighbors sold theirs at that price. But you wouldn't, because you knew that in the fall, when everybody came back to town, you would find plenty of people who'd give you \$50,000 for your

house; you wouldn't sell it for \$25,000, and you wouldn't worry. Would you, now?" he finished, cheerfully.

"No," she said slowly. "I wouldn't worry. But," hesitatingly, for, after all, she felt the awkwardness of her position, "I wish I had the money instead of the bonds." And she added, self-defensively: "I haven't slept a wink for three nights thinking about this."

The thought of his coming emancipation cheered Mr. Colwell immensely. "Your wish shall be gratified, Mrs. Hunt. Why didn't you ask me before, if you felt that way?" he said, in mild reproach. And he summoned a clerk.

"Make out a check for \$35,000 payable to Mrs. Rose Hunt, and transfer the 100 Manhattan Electric Light 5s to my personal account."

He gave her the check and told her: "Here is the money. I am very sorry that I unwittingly caused you some anxiety. But all's well that ends well. Any time that I can be of service to you— Not at all. Don't thank me, please; no. Good morning."

But he did not tell her that by taking over her account he paid \$96,000 for bonds he could have bought in the open market for \$93,000. He was the politest man in Wall Street; and, after all, he had known Hunt for many years.

A week later Manhattan Electric 5-per-cent bonds sold at 96 again. Mrs. Hunt called on him. It was noon, and she evidently had spent the morning mustering up courage for the visit. They greeted one another, she embarrassed and he courteous and kindly as usual.

"Mr. Colwell, you still have those bonds, haven't you?"

"Why, yes."

"I—I think I'd like to take them back."

"Certainly, Mrs. Hunt. I'll find out how much they are selling for." He summoned a clerk to get a quotation on Manhattan Electric 5s. The clerk telephoned to one of their bond-specialists, and learned that the bonds could be bought at 96½. He reported to Mr. Colwell, and Mr. Colwell told Mrs. Hunt, adding: "So you see they are practically where they were when you bought them before."

She hesitated. "I—I—didn't you buy them from me at 93? I'd like to buy them back at the same price I sold them to you."

"No, Mrs. Hunt," he said; "I bought them from you at 96."

"But the price was 93." And she added, corroboratively: "Don't you remember it was in all the papers?"

"Yes, but I gave you back exactly the same amount that I received from you, and I had the bonds transferred to my account. They stand on our books as having cost me 96."

"But couldn't you let me have them at 93?" she persisted.

"I'm very sorry, Mrs. Hunt, but I don't see how I could. If you buy them in the open market now, you will be in exactly the same position as before you sold them, and you will make a great deal of money, because they are going up now. Let me buy them for you at 96½."

"At 93, you mean," with a tentative smile.

"At whatever price they may be selling for," he corrected, patiently.

"Why did you let me sell them, Mr. Colwell?" she asked, plaintively.

"But, my dear madam, if you buy them now, you will be no worse off than if you had kept the original lot."

"Well, I don't see why it is that I have to pay 96½ now for the very same bonds I sold last Tuesday at 93. If it was some other bonds," she added, "I wouldn't mind so much."

"My dear Mrs. Hunt, it makes no difference which bonds you hold. They have all risen in price, yours and mine and everybody's; your lot was the same as any other lot. You see that, don't you?"

"Ye-es; but——"

"Well, then, you are exactly where you were before you bought any. You've lost nothing, because you received your money back intact."

"I'm willing to buy them," she said resolutely, "at 93."

"Mrs. Hunt, I wish I could buy them for you at that price. But there are none for sale cheaper than 96½."

"Oh, why did I let you sell my bonds!" she said, disconsolately.

"Well, you worried so much because they had declined that——"

"Yes, but I didn't know anything about business matters. You know I didn't, Mr. Colwell," she finished, accusingly.

He smiled in his good-natured way. "Shall I buy the bonds for you?" he asked. He knew the plans of

the syndicate in charge, and being sure the bonds would advance, he thought she might as well share in the profits. At heart he felt sorry for her.

She smiled back. "Yes," she told him, "at 93." It did not seem right to her, notwithstanding his explanations, that she should pay 96½ for them, when the price a few days ago was 93.

"But how can I, if they are 96½?"

"Mr. Colwell, it is 93 or nothing." She was almost pale at her own boldness. It really seemed to her as if the price had only been waiting for her to sell out in order to advance. And though she wanted the bonds, she did not feel like yielding.

"Then I very much fear it will have to be nothing."

"Er—good morning, Mr. Colwell," on the verge of tears.

"Good morning, Mrs. Hunt." And before he knew it, forgetting all that had gone before, he added: "Should you change your mind, I should be glad to—"

"I know I wouldn't pay more than 93 if I lived to be a thousand years." She looked expectantly at him, to see if he had repented, and she smiled—the smile that is a woman's last resort, that says, almost articulately: "I know you will, of course, do as I ask. My question is only a formality. I know your nobility, and I fear not." But he only bowed her out, very politely.

On the Stock Exchange the price of *Man. Elec. L. H. & P. Co.* 5s rose steadily. Mrs. Hunt, too indignant to feel lacrymose, discussed the subject with her Cousin Emily and her husband. Emily was very much interested. Between her and Mrs. Hunt they

forced the poor man to make strange admissions, and, deliberately ignoring his feeble protests, they worked themselves up to the point of believing that, while it would be merely generous of Mr. Colwell to let his friend's widow have the bonds at 93, it would be only his obvious duty to let her have them at 96½. The moment they reached this decision Mrs. Hunt knew how to act. And the more she thought the more indignant she became. The next morning she called on her late husband's executor and friend.

Her face wore the look often seen on those ardent souls who think their sacred and inalienable rights have been trampled upon by the tyrant Man, but who at the same time feel certain the hour of retribution is near.

"Good morning, Mr. Colwell. I came to find out exactly what you propose to do about my bonds." Her voice conveyed the impression that she expected violent opposition, perhaps even bad language, from him.

"Good morning, Mrs. Hunt. Why, what do you mean?"

His affected ignorance deepened the lines on her face. Instead of bluster he was using *finesse*!

"I think you ought to know, Mr. Colwell," she said, meaningly.

"Well, I really don't. I remember you wouldn't heed my advice when I told you not to sell out, and again when I advised you to buy them back."

"Yes, at 96½," she burst out, indignantly.

"Well, if you had, you would to-day have a profit of over \$7,000."

"And whose fault is it that I haven't?" She paused

for a reply. Receiving none, she went on: "But never mind; I have decided to accept your offer," very bitterly, as if a poor widow could not afford to be a chooser; "I'll take those bonds at 96½." And she added, under her breath: "Although it really ought to be 93."

"But, Mrs. Hunt," said Colwell, in measureless astonishment, "you can't do that, you know. You wouldn't buy them when I wanted you to, and I can't buy them for you now at 96½. Really, you ought to see that."

Cousin Emily and she had gone over a dozen imaginary interviews with Mr. Colwell—of varying degrees of storminess—the night before, and they had, in an idle moment, and not because they really expected it, represented Mr. Colwell as taking that identical stand. Mrs. Hunt was, accordingly, prepared to show both that she knew her moral and technical right, and that she was ready to resist any attempt to ignore them. So she said, in a voice so ferociously calm that it should have warned any guilty man: "Mr. Colwell, will you answer me one question?"

"A thousand, Mrs. Hunt, with pleasure."

"No; only one. Have you kept the bonds that I bought, or have you not?"

"What difference does that make, Mrs. Hunt?"

He evaded the answer.

"Yes or no, please. Have you, or have you not, those same identical bonds?"

"Yes; I have. But—"

"And to whom do those bonds belong, by rights?" She was still pale, but resolute.

"To me, certainly."

"To *you*, Mr. Colwell?" She smiled. And in her smile were a thousand feelings; but not mirth.

"Yes, Mrs. Hunt, to me."

"And do you propose to keep them?"

"I certainly do."

"Not even if I pay 96½ will you give them to me?"

"Mrs. Hunt," Colwell said with warmth, "when I took those bonds off your hands at 93 it represented a loss on paper of \$3,000—"

She smiled in pity—pity for his judgment in thinking her so hopelessly stupid.

"And when you wanted me to sell them back to you at 93 after they had risen to 96½, if I had done as you wished, it would have meant an actual loss of \$3,000 to me."

Again she smiled—the same smile, only the pity was now mingled with rising indignation.

"For Harry's sake I was willing to pocket the first loss, in order that you might not worry. But I didn't see why I should make you a present of \$3,000," he said, very quietly.

"I never asked you to do it," she retorted, hotly.

"If you had lost any money through my fault, it would have been different. But you had your original capital unimpaired. You had nothing to lose, if you bought back the same bonds at practically the same price. Now you come and ask me to sell you the bonds at 96½ that are selling in the market for 104, as a reward, I suppose, for your refusal to take my advice."

"Mr. Colwell, you take advantage of my position to insult me. And Harry trusted you so much! But let me tell you that I am not going to let you do just

as you please. No doubt you would like to have me go home and forget how you've acted toward me. But I am going to consult a lawyer, and see if I am to be treated this way by a *friend* of my husband's. You've made a mistake, Mr. Colwell."

"Yes; madam, I certainly have. And, in order to avoid making any more, you will oblige me greatly by never again calling at this office. By all means consult a lawyer. Good morning, madam," said the politest man in Wall Street.

"We'll see," was all she said; and she left the room.

Colwell paced up and down his office nervously. It was seldom that he allowed himself to lose his temper, and he did not like it. The ticker whirled away excitedly, and in an absent-minded, half-disgusted way he glanced sideways at it.

"*Man. Elec.* 5s, 106 $\frac{1}{4}$," he read on the tape.

THE TRANSFIGURATION
OF MISS PHILURA

BY FLORENCE M. KINGSLEY





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MISS PHILURA RICE tied her faded bonnet-strings under her faded chin with hands that trembled a little; then she leaned forward and gazed anxiously at the reflection which confronted her. A somewhat pinched and wistful face it was, with large, light-lashed blue eyes, arched over with a mere pretense at eyebrows. More than once in her twenties Miss Philura had ventured to eke out this scanty provision of Nature with a modicum of burned match stealthily applied in the privacy of her virgin chamber. But the twenties, with their attendant dreams and follies, were definitely past; just how long past no one knew exactly—Miss Philura never informed the curious on this point.

As for the insufficient eyebrows, they symbolized, as it were, a meager and restricted life, vaguely acknowledged as the dispensation of an obscurely hostile but consistent Providence; a Providence far too awful and exalted—as well as hostile—to interest itself benignantly in so small and neutral a personality as stared back at her from the large, dim mirror of Cousin Maria Van Deuser's third-story back bedroom. Not that Miss Philura ever admitted such dubious

thoughts to the select circle of her conscious reflections; more years ago than she cared to count she had grappled with her discontent, had thrust it resolutely out of sight, and on the top of it she had planted a big stone marked Resignation. Nevertheless, at times the stone heaved and trembled ominously.

At sound of a brisk tap at her chamber door the lady turned with a guilty start to find the fresh-colored, impertinent face of the French maid obtruding itself into the room.

"Ze madame waits," announced this individual, and with a coldly comprehensive eye swept the small figure from head to foot.

"Yes, yes, my dear, I am quite ready—I am coming at once!" faltered Miss Philura, with a propitiatory smile, and more than ever painfully aware that the skirt of her best black gown was irremediably short and scant, that her waist was too flat, her shoulders too sloping, her complexion faded, her forehead wrinkled, and her bonnet unbecoming.

As she stepped uncertainly down the dark, narrow stairway she rebuked herself severely for these vain and worldly thoughts. "To be a church member, in good and regular standing, and a useful member of society," she assured herself strenuously, "should be and is sufficient for me."

Ten minutes later, Miss Philura, looking smaller and more insignificant than usual was seated in the carriage opposite Mrs. J. Mortimer Van Deuser—a large, heavily upholstered lady of majestic deportment, paying diligent heed to the words of wisdom which fell from the lips of her hostess and kinswoman.

"During your short stay in Boston," that lady was remarking impressively, "you will, of course, wish to avail yourself of those means of culture and advancement so sadly lacking in your own environment. This, my dear Philura, is preeminently the era of progressive thought. We can have at best, I fear, but a faint conception of the degree to which mankind will be able, in the years of the coming century, to shake off the gross and material limitations of sense."

Mrs. Van Deuser paused to settle her sables preliminary to recognizing with an expansive smile an acquaintance who flashed by them in a victoria; after which she adjusted the diamonds in her large, pink ears, and proceeded with unctuous tranquillity: "On this occasion, my dear Philura, you will have the pleasure of listening to an address by Mrs. B. Isabelle Smart, one of our most advanced thinkers along this line. You will, I trust, be able to derive from her words aliment which will influence the entire trend of your individual experience."

"Where—in what place will the lady speak—I mean, will it be in the church?" ventured Miss Philura in a depressed whisper. She sighed apprehensively as she glanced down at the tips of her shabby gloves.

"The lecture will take place in the drawing-room of the Woman's Ontological Club," responded Mrs. Van Deuser, adding with austere sweetness of tone: "The club deals exclusively with those conceptions or principles which lie at the base of all phenomena; including being, reality, substance, time, space, motion, change, identity, difference, and cause—in a word, my dear Philura, with ultimate metaphysical philosophy." A majestic and conclusive sweep of a perfectly gloved

hand suggested infinity and reduced Miss Philura into shrinking silence.

When Mrs. B. Isabelle Smart began to speak she became almost directly aware of a small, wistful face, with faded blue eyes and a shabby, unbecoming bonnet, which, surrounded as it was on all sides by tossing plumes, rich velvets and sparkling gems, with their accompaniments of full-fleshed, patrician countenances, took to itself a look of positive distinction. Mrs. Smart's theme, as announced by the President of the Ontological Club, was Thought Forces and the Infinite, a somewhat formidable-sounding subject, but one which the pale, slight, plainly dressed but singularly bright-eyed lady, put forward as the speaker of the afternoon, showed no hesitancy in attacking.

Before three minutes had passed Miss Philura Rice had forgotten that such things as shabby gloves, ill-fitting gowns, unbecoming bonnets, and superfluous birthdays existed. In ten minutes more she was leaning forward in breathless attention, the faded eyes aglow, the unbecoming bonnet pushed back from a face more wistful than ever, but flushed with a joyful excitement.

"This unseen Good hems us about on every side," the speaker was saying, with a comprehensive sweep of her capable-looking hands. "It presses upon us, more limitless, more inexhaustible, more free than the air that we breathe! Out of it *every* need, *every* want, *every* yearning of humanity can be, must be, supplied. To you, who have hitherto led starved lives, hungering, longing for the good things which you believe a

distant and indifferent God has denied you—to you I declare that in this encircling, ever-present, invisible, exhaustless Beneficence is already provided a lavish abundance of everything which you can possibly want or think! Nay, desire itself is but God—Good—Love, knocking at the door of your consciousness. It is impossible for you to desire anything that is not already your own! It only remains for you to bring the invisible into visibility—to take of the everlasting substance what you will!

“And how must you do this? Ask, and *believe that you have!* You have asked many times, perhaps, and have failed to receive. Why? You have failed to *believe*. Ask, then, for what you will! Ask, and at once return thanks for what you have asked! In the asking and *believing* is the thing itself made manifest. Declare that it is yours! Expect it! Believe it! Hold to it without wavering—no matter how empty your hands may seem! *It is yours*, and God’s infinite creation shall lapse into nothingness; His stars shall fall from high Heaven like withered leaves sooner than that you shall fail to obtain all that you have asked!”

When, at the close of the lecture, Mrs. B. Isabelle Smart became the center of a polite yet insistent crush of satins, velvets, and broadcloths, permeated by an aroma of violets and a gentle hum of delicate flattery, she was aware of a timid hand upon her arm, and turned to look into the small, eager face under the unfashionable bonnet.

“You—you meant religious gifts, did you not?” faltered the faint, discouraged voice; “faith, hope and—and—the—the being resigned to God’s will, and—and endeavoring to bear the cross with patience.”

"I meant *everything* that you want," answered the bright-eyed one with deliberate emphasis, the bright eyes softening as they took in more completely the pinched outlines and the eager child's look shining from out the worn and faded woman's face.

"But—but there is so much! I—I never had anything that I really wanted—things, you know, that one could hardly mention in one's prayers."

"Have them now. Have them all. God is all. All is God. You are God's. God is yours!"

Then the billowing surges of silk and velvet swept the small, inquiring face into the background with the accustomed ease and relentlessness of billowing surges.

Having partaken copiously of certain "material beliefs" consisting of salads and sandwiches, accompanied by divers cups of strong coffee, Mrs. J. Mortimer Van Deuser had become pleasantly flushed and expansive. "A most unique, comprehensive and uplifting view of our spiritual environment," she remarked to Miss Philura when the two ladies found themselves on their homeward way. Her best society smile still lingered blandly about the curves and creases of her stolid, high-colored visage; the dying violets on her massive satin bosom gave forth their sweetest parting breath.

The little lady on the front seat of the carriage sat very erect; red spots glowed upon her faded cheeks. "I think," she said tremulously, "that it was just—wonderful! I—I am so very happy to have heard it. Thank you a thousand times, dear Cousin Maria, for taking me."

Mrs. Van Deuser raised her gold-rimmed glasses and settled them under arching brows, while the soci-

ety smile faded quite away. "Of course," she said coldly, "one should make due and proper allowance for facts—as they exist. And also—er—consider above all what interpretation is best suited to one's individual station in life. Truth, my dear Philura, adapts itself freely to the needs of the poor and lowly as well as to the demands of those upon whom devolve the higher responsibilities of wealth and position; our dear Master Himself spoke of the poor as always with us, you will remember. A lowly but pious life, passed in humble recognition of God's chastening providence, is doubtless good and proper for many worthy persons."

Miss Philura's blue eyes flashed rebelliously for perhaps the first time in uncounted years. She made no answer. As for the long and presumably instructive homily on the duties and prerogatives of the lowly, lasting quite up to the moment when the carriage stopped before the door of Mrs. Van Deuser's residence, it fell upon ears which heard not. Indeed, her next remark was so entirely irrelevant that her august kinswoman stared in displeased amazement. "I am going to purchase some—some necessities to-morrow, Cousin Maria; I should like Fifine to go with me."

Miss Philura acknowledged to herself, with a truthfulness which she felt to be almost brazen, that her uppermost yearnings were of a wholly mundane character.

During a busy and joyous evening she endeavored to formulate these thronging desires; by bedtime she had even ventured—with the aid of a stubbed lead-pencil—to indite the most immediate and urgent of these wants as they knocked at the door of her con-

sciousness. The list, hidden guiltily away in the depths of her shabby purse, read something as follows:

"I wish to be beautiful and admired. I want two new dresses; a hat with plumes, and a silk petticoat that rustles. I want some new kid gloves and a feather boa (a long one made of ostrich feathers). I wish ——" The small, blunt pencil had been lifted in air for the space of three minutes before it again descended; then, with cheeks that burned, Miss Philura had written the fateful words: "I wish to have a lover and to be married."

"There, I have done it!" she said to herself, her little fingers trembling with agitation. "He must already exist in the encircling Good. He is mine. I am engaged to be married at this very moment."

To lay this singular memorandum before her Maker appeared to Miss Philura little short of sacrilegious; but the thought of the mysterious Abundance of which the seeress had spoken, urging itself, as it were, upon her acceptance, encouraged her. She arose from her evening orisons with a glowing face. "I have asked," she said aloud, "and I *believe* I shall have."

Mademoiselle Fifine passed a very enjoyable morning with Miss Philura. To choose, to purchase, and above all to transform the ugly into the beautiful, filled the French woman's breast with enthusiasm. Her glance, as it rested upon her companion's face and figure, was no longer coldly critical, but cordially appreciative. "Ze madame," she declared, showing her white teeth in a pleasant smile, "has very many advantage. *Voilà*, ze hair— *c' est admirable*, as any one may perceive! Pardon, while for one little minute I arrange! Ah—*mon dieu!* Regard ze difference!"

The two were at this moment in a certain millinery shop conducted by a discreet and agreeable compatriot of Fifine's. This individual now produced a modest hat of black, garnished with plumes, which, set lightly on the loosened bands of golden-brown hair, completed the effect "*délicieusement!*" declared the French women in chorus.

With a beating heart Miss Philura stared into the mirror at her changed reflection. "It is quite—quite true!" she said aloud. "It is all true."

Fifine and the milliner exchanged delighted shrugs and grimaces. In truth, the small, erect figure, in its perfectly fitting gown, bore no resemblance to the plain, elderly Miss Philura of yesterday. As for the face beneath the nodding plumes, it was actually radiant—transfigured—with joy and hope.

Mrs. J. Mortimer Van Deuser regarded the apparition which greeted her at luncheon with open disapproval. This new Miss Philura, with the prettily flushed cheeks, the bright eyes, the fluff of waving hair, and—yes, actually a knot of fragrant violets at her breast, had given her an unpleasant shock of surprise. "I am sure I hope you can *afford* all this," was her comment, with a deliberate adjustment of eyebrows and glasses calculated to add mordant point and emphasis to her words.

"Oh, yes," replied Miss Philura tranquilly, but with heightened color; "I can afford whatever I like now."

Mrs. Van Deuser stared hard at her guest. She found herself actually hesitating before Philura Rice. Then she drew her massive figure to its full height, and again bent the compelling light of her gold-rimmed glasses full upon the small person of her kinswoman.

"What—er—I do not understand," she began lamely. "*Where* did you obtain the money for all this?"

Miss Philura raised her eyebrows ever so little—somehow they seemed to suit the clear blue eyes admirably to-day.

"The money?" she repeated, in a tone of surprise. "Why, out of the bank, of course."

Upon the fact that she had drawn out and expended in a single morning nearly the whole of the modest sum commonly made to supply her meager living for six months Miss Philura bestowed but a single thought. "In the all-encircling Good," she said to herself serenely, "there is plenty of money for me; why, then, should I not spend this?"

CHAPTER II

THE village of Innisfield was treated to a singular surprise on the Sunday morning following, when Miss Philura Rice, newly returned from her annual visit to Boston, walked down the aisle to her accustomed place in the singers' seat. Whispered comment and surmise flew from pew to pew, sandwiched irreverently between hymn, prayer, and sermon. Indeed, the last-mentioned portion of the service, being of unusual length and dulness, was utilized by the female members of the congregation in making a minute inventory of the amazing changes which had taken place in the familiar figure of their townswoman.

"Philury's had money left her, I shouldn't wonder;" "Her Cousin Van Deuser's been fixin' her up;" "She's a-goin' to be married!" were some of the opinions, wholly at variance with the text of the discourse, which found their way from mouth to mouth.

Miss Electa Pratt attached herself with decision to her friend, Miss Rice, directly the service was at an end. "I'm just *dying* to hear all about it!" she exclaimed, with a fond pressure of the arm linked within her own—this after the two ladies had extricated themselves from the circle of curious and critical faces at the church door.

Miss Philura surveyed the speaker with meditative

eyes; it seemed to her that Miss Pratt was curiously altered since she had seen her last.

"*Have* you had a fortune left you?" went on her inquisitor, blinking enviously at the nodding plumes which shaded Miss Philura's blue eyes. "Everybody *says* you have; and that you are going to get married soon. I'm sure you'll tell *me* everything!"

Miss Philura hesitated for a moment. "I haven't exactly had money left me," she began; then her eyes brightened. "I have all that I need," she said, and straightened her small figure confidently.

"And *are* you going to be married, dear?"

"Yes," said Miss Philura distinctly.

"Well, I *never*—Philura Rice!" almost screamed her companion. "Do tell me *when*; and *who* is it?"

"I can not tell you that—now," said Miss Philura simply. "He is in ——" She was about to add "the encircling Good," but she reflected that Miss Pratt might fail to comprehend her. "I will introduce you to him—later," she concluded with dignity.

To follow the fortunes of Miss Philura during the ensuing weeks were a pleasant though monotonous task; the encircling Good proved itself wholly adequate to the demands made upon it. Though there was little money in the worn purse, there were numerous and pressing invitations to tea, to dinner, and to spend the day, from hosts of friends who had suddenly become warm, affectionate, and cordially appreciative; and not even the new Methodist minister's wife could boast of such lavish donations, in the shape of new-laid eggs, frosted cakes, delicate biscuit, toothsome crullers, and choice fruits as found their way to Miss Philura's door.

The recipient of these manifold favors walked, as it were, upon air. "For unto every one that hath shall be given," she read in the privacy of her own shabby little parlor, "and he shall have abundance."

"Everything that I want is mine!" cried the little lady, bedewing the pages of Holy Writ with happy tears. The thought of the lover and husband who, it is true, yet lingered in the invisible, brought a becoming blush to her cheek. "I shall see him soon," she reflected tranquilly. "He is mine—mine!"

At that very moment Miss Electa Pratt was seated in the awe-inspiring reception-room of Mrs. J. Mortimer Van Deuser's residence in Beacon Street. The two ladies were engaged in earnest conversation.

"What you tell me with regard to Philura fills me with surprise and alarm," Mrs. Van Deuser was remarking with something more than her accustomed majesty of tone and mien. "Philura Rice certainly did *not* become engaged to be married during her stay in Boston. Neither has she been the recipient of funds from myself, nor, to the best of my knowledge, from any other member of the family. Personally, I have always been averse to the encouragement of extravagance and vanity in those destined by a wise Providence to pass their lives in a humble station. I fear exceedingly that Philura's visits to Boston have failed to benefit her as I wished and intended."

"But she *said* that she had money, and that she was going to get married," persisted Miss Pratt. "You don't suppose"—lowering her strident tones to a whisper—"that the poor thing is going crazy?"

Mrs. Van Deuser had concentrated her intellectual and penetrating orbs upon a certain triangular knob that garnished the handle of her visitor's umbrella; she vouchsafed no reply. When she did speak, after the lapse of some moments, it was to dismiss that worthy person with a practised ease and adroitness which permitted of nothing further, either in the way of information or conjecture.

"Philura is, after all, a distant relative of my own," soliloquized Mrs. Van Deuser, "and *as such* is entitled to consideration."

Her subsequent cogitations presently took shape to themselves and became a letter, despatched in the evening mail and bearing the address of the Rev. Silas Pettibone, Innisfield. Mrs. Van Deuser recalled in this missive Miss Philura's "unfortunate visit" to the Ontological Club, and the patent indications of its equally unfortunate consequences. "I should be inclined to take myself severely to task in the matter," wrote the excellent and conscientious lady, "if I had not improved the opportunity to explain at length, in the hearing of my misguided relative, the nature and scope of God's controlling providence, as signally displayed in His dealings with the humbler classes of society. As an under-shepherd of the lowly flock to which Miss Rice belongs, my dear Mr. Pettibone, I lay her spiritual state before you, and beg that you will at once endeavor to set right her erroneous views of the overruling guidance of the Supreme Being. I shall myself intercede for Philura before the Throne of Grace."

The Rev. Silas Pettibone read this remarkable communication with interest; indeed, after returning it to

its envelope and bestowing it in his most inaccessible coat-pocket, the under-shepherd of the lowly flock of Innisfield gave himself the task of resurrecting and reperusing the succinct yet weighty words of Mrs. Van Deuser.

If the Rev. Silas had been blessed with a wife, to whose nimbler wits he might have submitted the case, it is probable that he would not have sat for so long a time in his great chair brooding over the contents of the violet-tinted envelope from Boston. But unfortunately the good minister had been forced to lay his helpmate beneath the rough sods of the village churchyard some three years previous. Since this sad event, it is scarcely necessary to state, he had found it essential to his peace of mind to employ great discretion in his dealings with the female members of his flock. He viewed the matter in hand with vague misgivings. Strangely enough, he had not heard of Miss Philura's good fortune, and to his masculine and impartial vision there had appeared no especial change in the aspect or conduct of the little woman.

"Let me think," he mused, passing his white hand through the thick, dark locks, just touched with gray, which shaded his perplexed forehead. He was a personable man, was the Rev. Silas Pettibone. "Let me think: Miss Philura has been very regular in her attendance at church and prayer-meeting of late. No, I have observed nothing wrong—nothing blame-worthy in her walk and conversation. But I can not approve of these—ah—clubs." He again cast his eye upon the letter. "Ontology, now, is certainly not a fit subject for the consideration of the female mind."

Having delivered himself of this sapient opinion, the reverend gentleman made ready for a round of parochial visits. Foremost on his list appeared the name of Miss Philura Rice. As he stood upon the doorstep, shaded on either side by fragrant lilac plumes, he resolved to be particularly brief, though impressive, in his pastoral ministrations. If this especial member of his flock had wandered from the straight and narrow way into forbidden by-paths, it was his manifest duty to restore her in the spirit of meekness; but he would waste no unnecessary time or words in the process.

The sunshine, pleasantly interrupted by snowy muslin curtains, streamed in through the open windows of Miss Philura's modest parlor, kindling into scarlet flame the blossoms of the thrifty geranium which stood upon the sill, and flickered gently on the brown head of the little mistress of the house, seated with her sewing in a favorite rocking-chair. Miss Philura was unaffectedly glad to see her pastor. She told him at once that last Sunday's sermon was inspiring; that she felt sure that after hearing it the unconverted could hardly fail to be convinced of the error of their ways.

The Rev. Silas Pettibone seated himself opposite Miss Philura and regarded her attentively. The second-best new dress was undeniably becoming; the blue eyes under the childish brows beamed upon him cordially. "I am pleased to learn—ah—that you can approve the discourse of Sabbath morning," he began in somewhat labored fashion. "I have had occasion to—that is—er, my attention has been called of late to the fact that certain members of the church have

—well, to put it briefly, some have fallen grievously away from the faith.”

Miss Philura’s sympathy and concern were at once apparent. “I do not see,” she said simply, “how one can fall away from the faith. It is so beautiful to believe!”

The small, upturned face shone with so sweet and serene a light that the under-shepherd of the Innisfield flock leaned forward and fixed his earnest brown eyes on the clear blue eyes of the lady. In treatises relating to the affections this stage of the proceedings is generally conceded to mark a crisis. It marked a crisis on this occasion; during that moment the Rev. Silas Pettibone forgot at once and for all time the violet-tinted envelope in his coat-tail pocket. It was discovered six months later and consigned to oblivion by—but let us not anticipate.

“God is so kind, *so generous!*” pursued Miss Philura softly. “If we once know Him as our Father we can never again be afraid, or lonely, or poor, or lacking for any good thing. How is it possible to fall away? I do not understand. Is it not because they do not know Him?”

It is altogether likely that the pastor of the Innisfield Presbyterian Church found conditions in the spiritual state of Miss Philura which necessitated earnest and prolonged admonition; at all events, the sun was sinking behind the western horizon when the reverend gentleman slowly and thoughtfully made his way toward the parsonage. Curiously enough, this highly respectable domicile had taken on during his absence an aspect of gloom and loneliness unpleasantly

apparent. "A scarlet geranium in the window might improve it," thought the vaguely dissatisfied proprietor, as he put on his dressing-gown and thrust his feet into his newest pair of slippers. (Presented by Miss Electa Pratt "to my pastor, with grateful affection.")

"I believe I failed to draw Miss Philura's attention to the obvious relation between faith and works," cogitated the reverend Silas, as he sat before his lonely hearth, placidly scorching the soles of his new slippers before the cheerful blaze. "It will be altogether advisable, I think, to set her right on that point without delay. I will—ah—just look in again for a moment to-morrow afternoon."

"God's purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour.
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower!"

sang the choir of the Innisfield Presbyterian Church one Sunday morning a month later. And Miss Philura Rice—as was afterward remarked—sang the words with such enthusiasm and earnestness that her high soprano soared quite above all the other voices in the choir, and this despite the fact that Miss Electa Pratt was putting forth her nasal contralto with more than wonted insistence.

The last-mentioned lady found the sermon—on the text, "Little children, love one another, for love is of God"—so extremely convincing, and her own subsequent spiritual state in such an agitated condition, that she took occasion to seek a private conversation with her pastor in his study on that same Sunday afternoon.

"I don't know *when* I've been so wrought up!" de-

clared Miss Pratt, with a preliminary display of immaculate handkerchief. "I cried *and cried* after I got home from church this morning. Ma she sez to me, sez she, 'What ails you, Lecty?' And I sez to ma, sez I, 'Ma, it was that *blessed* sermon. I don't know *when* I ever heard anything like it! That dear pastor of ours is just ripening for a better world!' " Miss Electa paused a moment to shed copious tears over this statement. "It does seem to me, *dear* Mr. Pettibone," she resumed, with a tender glance and a comprehensive sniff, "that you ain't looking as well as usual. I said so to Philura Rice as we was coming out of church, and I really hate to tell you how she answered me; only I feel as though it was my duty. 'Mr. Pettibone is perfectly well!' she says, and tossed those feathers of hers higher'n ever. Philura's awful worldly, I *do* grieve to say—if *not worse*. I've been a-thinking for some time that it was my Christian duty (however painful) to tell you what Mis' Van Deuser, of Boston, said about—"

The Rev. Silas Pettibone frowned with awful dignity. He brought down his closed fist upon his open Bible with forensic force and suddenness. "Miss Philura Rice," he said emphatically, "is one of the most spiritual—the most lovely and consistent—Christian characters it has ever been my privilege to know. Her faith and unworldliness are absolutely beyond the comprehension of—of—many of my flock. I must further tell you that I hope to have the great happiness of leading Miss Rice to the matrimonial altar in the near future."

Miss Electa Pratt sank bank in her chair petrified with astonishment. "Well, I *must* say!" she gasped.

"And she was engaged to you *all this time* and I never knew it!"

The Rev. Pettibone bent his eyes coldly upon his agitated parishioner. "I am at a loss to comprehend your very strange comment, Miss Pratt," he said; "the engagement has been of such very short duration that I can not regard it as surprising that you should not have heard of it. It—ah—took place only yesterday."

Miss Electa straightened her angular shoulders with a jerk. "Yesterday!" she almost screamed. "Well! I can tell *you* that Philura Rice told *me* that she was engaged to be married more than three months ago!"

"You are certainly mistaken, madam," began the minister in a somewhat perturbed tone, which did not escape the notice of the now flushed and triumphant spinster.

"More than three months ago!" she repeated with incisive emphasis. "*Now* maybe you'll listen to me while I tell you what I know about Philura Rice!"

But the lady had reckoned without her host. The Rev. Silas arose to his feet with decision. "I certainly will *not* listen to anything derogatory to Miss Rice," he said sternly. "She is my promised wife, you will remember." With that the prudent minister beat a hasty retreat, to entrench himself without apology or delay in the inner fastnesses of the parsonage.

Miss Electa rolled her greenish orbs about the chamber of learning with a thoughtful smile. "If Philura Rice ain't crazy," she said aloud: "an' I guess she ain't far from it. She's told a wicked lie! In

either case, it's my Christian duty to see this thing put a stop to!"

That evening after service Miss Philura, her modest cheeks dyed with painful blushes, confessed to her promised husband that she had indeed announced her intentions of matrimony some three months previous. "I wanted somebody to—to love me," she faltered; "somebody in particular, you know; and—and I asked God to give me—a—a husband. After I had asked, of course, I *believed* that I *had*. He—he was already in the encircling Good, you know, or I should not have wanted him! When Electa asked me point blank, what could I say without—without denying—*God?*"

The brave voice faltered more than once during this recital; and finally broke down altogether when the Rev. Silas Pettibone, his brown eyes shining, exclaimed in joyful yet solemn tones, "And God sent me!"

The encircling Good was perfectly manifest at that moment in the shape of two strong arms. Miss Philura rested in them and was glad.

MIKE GRADY'S SAFETY

BY WILL E. LEWIS



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A COUPLE of years ago, I had a baseball team at Cleveland, called the "All-Stars." It was the usual barn-storming outfit, a couple of cast-off major leaguers, a few college boys earning their board through the summer vacation, and the rest star performers from various cross-roads towns, who were willing to work hard all summer for ten a week, so as to go home in the fall and swell around town as "professionals."

We had a fair season. I had made enough to pay the boys, and put a little by besides. We'd played town teams all over the State, and won our share of the games, especially when we had a little coin up on the side.

About the middle of September, we decided it was time to disband. The town teams were about all through for the season, and my college boys were due back to their book-stunts.

I had arranged a final game with a team at Valeria for the last Saturday, but on Wednesday I got a letter canceling the game because of the lateness of the season. I was pretty sore about it, knowing I should have to pay the boys for the week, whether we played or not. So I chased right over to the "Plaindealer"

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office, and had them put this notice in the sporting columns:

The "All-Stars" want game, Cleveland or vicinity, Saturday this week. Address Grady, care this paper.

Friday morning I got this letter:

SHADRON, O., September —, 190-

MR. GRADY, "All-Stars."

Dear Sir: I notice in the "Plaindealer" that you want a game Saturday. We will play you at Shadron at 2.30 P. M. Will give you half of the gate receipts, and guarantee \$25. If you want to come, wire at once, and bring umpire with your team.

Yours truly,

GUSTAVE ADOLPHUS ANDERSON, *Manager.*

I didn't know Gustave Adolphus Anderson, but I wanted a game bad; so, in spite of the small guarantee, I decided to take a chance. But I worried quite a bit over the umpire business. This was the first time I had ever run up against a local manager who wasn't anxious to supply a dozen umpires from town, if any were wanted. I decided that Gustave must be new at the game.

And he certainly looked new, brand-new, when I got off the two-o'clock car at Shadron, Saturday, with the team, Sully, the utility, and Connors, whom I brought to umpire. A slim young kid, all glasses and freckles and patent-leather shoes and pink shirt, came out from the crowd. He spotted me right away, because I wasn't in uniform.

"Mister Grady?" he says, in a bold, hesitating sort of tone, like one who wants to speak up because the crowd's listening, but who's scared at the sound of his own voice.

"That's me," I replied.

"I'm Gustave Anderson, manager of the Shadron team."

"Glad to meet you," says I, and he led the way to the grounds.

The kid manager made several attempts to start a talk, but was too flustered to get much beyond the weather. Then he happened to notice Biddy Murphy, my catcher, who was walking just in front of us, carrying his mask over his shoulder.

"What did you bring a catching-mask for?" asked Gustave.

Biddy heard him and looked around.

"Ter play marbles wit'—see!" he growled with his chin stuck out, startling the kid so that he shut up tight until we reached the grounds. Then he got nerve enough to ask:

"Did you bring an umpire?"

"Yep," I says. "Mr. Connors over there will officiate."

"I'm glad you brought him," said Gustave. "You'll have no objections to our Mr. Smiley as referee, will you?"

For a moment I didn't know whether the kid was guying me or not. I looked at him hard; he dropped his eyes and blushed.

"Referee?" I asked.

"Yes—Referee—Mr. Smiley—of Sweetwater College, you know."

"What in blazes do you think this is, my boy, a prize-fight?"

Gustave grew paler, but made a big try to put on a bold front.

"I don't think our boys will be rough," he says, "if yours aren't."

I stopped and caught him by the shoulder. "What in Blue Maria are you talking about?"

He squirmed and tried to break away. "Why—" he says, but couldn't get no farther. Just then I heard a thump, and saw a big brown oval go zigzagging into the air. Then something came over me.

"Young man!" I says, real stern, "what do you suppose we came here to play?"

"Why—football," says he, "of course!"

I threw up my hands. My lips worked hard for about a minute before the words began to come, then I let out a few choice sentiments that brought the "All-Stars" around me on the jump.

"What's the matter?" they asked.

"Matter?" says I. "Matter? Nothing at all! This begoggled young specimen of a pink-shirted fudge-eater has got us out here to play football! That's all."

For a minute there was a thick silence. Then the boys all began to talk at once. Some wanted to take the next car back, others insisted on staying and cleaning up the town. Finally young Wally Brown, my college pitcher, spoke up. Wally was the nerviest little player that ever faced a batter. Brown wasn't his right name either. You'd know his real one if I should tell you.

"Say, fellows," he says, "why not play 'em? There's four of us here that have been in the game at college, and three more that have played it on town teams. We can get together and make a showing

anyhow. It's too early in the season for them to be much good."

"I guess we won't," I said.

"Oh, please do, Mr. Grady!" piped up Gustave Adolphus, almost crying. "I don't know what I'll do if you don't play. Just see the crowd! They'll half kill me if there isn't a game."

I looked over the grand stand and sized up the crowd. There was about four hundred there already, and more coming. At a quarter per, that meant over fifty dollars for Mike. I turned to the boy.

"Anderson," I says, "you've got us out here on false pretenses. You've insulted the 'All-Stars' by not knowing what game they play, and you've insulted me personally by thinking I'd concern myself with such a willy-boy proposition as football. Under the circumstances, we'll take the next car back."

"Oh, please, Mister Grady! I'll—I'll be—ruined!" sobbed Gussie.

I stopped for a moment, and thought. "Maybe if you'd give me seventy-five per cent of the receipts I'd consider swallowing my pride, and asking the team to swallow theirs."

"Yes! Yes!" cried the kid. "I'll give you what you want, if you'll only play!"

I'd liked to kick myself for not making it a hundred per cent. I could have got it easy. I turned to the boys:

"Do you want to play 'em?"

Most of them were on their toes to get in the game. Bid Murphy and Wally Brown were the most anxious, and soon had everybody persuaded. Just as they'd all agreed the kid manager spoke up again:

"How many men have you got?"

"Nine, of course, and the utility makes ten. How many do you need for this fool game?"

"Eleven." Gussie looked glum.

"Ain't you got anybody in town that'll play with us?"

"We got 'em all—I mean—No! There isn't any one but the butcher's boy."

"Well, get him!"

"But he won't play because he's got a boil on the back of his neck."

I groaned. It looked as if I'd have to lose the money anyhow. Then I thought of Connors, who came to umpire.

"Here's Connors. He'll play!"

"Not on your life!" he yelled. "What d'ye take me for!"

Then Wally spoke up and says: "We'd better have Connors umpire anyway, so if any one should be rough, our interests will be looked after."

"Aw!" says Bid, "if they start getting funny, we don't need no one ter look after us."

"That's just it," said Wally. "We can't afford to have a town umpire rule any of us out of the game."

So Connors had to umpire.

"But who'll play, then?" I asked.

They all stood around and looked at me without saying a word.

"Who'll we get for the eleventh man?" I asked again.

Still they looked at me. Something began to dawn on me.

"You don't think," I says—"you don't imagine for a minute, that I'd—say, Goggles, when does that next car go back?"

Then they all spoke up. "You've got to play, Grady." "Come on, old horse." "Don't be a quitter!" I waved them away.

Then Wally Brown came up close to me, and looking over at the grand stand, says sort of careless like: "Gee, that's a big crowd! Must be about a hundred and fifty dollars there. And look at 'em come!"

The darned rascal! I looked at the crowd going through the gate, and couldn't think of anything else but my share of the quarters they were laying down.

"All right," I says; "I'll play."

I didn't have any togs with me; not even the baseball uniform which the team wore, and Gustave couldn't rake up anything that would fit me. So the boys made me turn my coat wrong side out, to keep the right side clean, and the buttons from catching. Then they rolled my pants up to the knee, so that I could have free leg action. It was cold that morning when I got up, and I had put on my red flannels for the first time that year, and I must have looked like a red-booted hullabaloo.

We made Wally Brown captain, and he started to place the men. He asked me where I'd like to play. I told him it was so long since I played that I'd forgotten the names, and asked him to mention a few.

He started: "Tackle, guard, center."

"Center!" I says. "That's me!" You see, I thought that the center would have nothing to do but stand way out with his hands on his knees like in baseball.

Wally looked me over. "All right," he says. "You're good and heavy, and not too tall."

So I went at center. The first thing Wally did, after placing the men, was to learn 'em some sort of signal business with numbers. Says he: "Second digit, first number, gives the play—odd to the right—even to the left, cipher to center, doublets kick. Understand?" I said I didn't quite. He says never mind, it would come to me.

Then we lined up and they showed me how to shove the ball back between my legs to the fellow they called quarter. He threw it to Wally, or one of the others, and then they all ran together. All I had to do was to throw the ball back, and then stand up and watch the others do the work.

Pretty soon it was time to start the game, and both teams spread out over the field, the Shadron High School team on one side and we on the other. One of the locals gave the ball a kick, and Wally caught it and ran back, and everybody piled on him and brought him down. It was great! I just stood there and watched them and decided that football wasn't such a bad game after all.

In a few seconds they lined up on each side of the ball. I stayed where I was, a hundred feet away from the bunch, with my hands on my knees in correct center-field form. Then Wally stood up and looked around. "Grady!" he yells, "what're you doing there? Come over and play your position."

Then I remembered about passing the ball back and trotted over to the bunch. I thought it was a fool notion, that passing-back business. The quarter could have picked the thing up himself easy enough.

"Well, I stood where they told me and squatted over the ball. Then, what do you think—just as the 'two-bit' man gives me the high sign to pitch her back, the fellow facing me grabs my back hair and gives me a yank. I wasn't prepared for anything of that kind, so I lost my balance and fell flat on my face. But I threw the blame ball as I went over. I guess it was what we'd call a wild pitch in baseball, because it went about five feet over the catcher's head.

A little duck from the Shadron side jumped on it, and they claimed it was their innings. I put up a holler to Connors, who was umpiring, and he backed me up. Said that there were no outs yet on either side. We started to have a row about it, Connors and me and the referee, with the whole Shadron team shaking their fists in our faces. Wally Brown hushed us up and said it was all right, so we quit. But Connors called time, and went and got his chest-protector and mask, and wore 'em all through the rest of the game, in spite of the holler that Wally put up. I guess Connors was wise all right.

On the first play after we lined up again, I laid out to get even. Just as the other center shoved the ball back I grabbed at his hair, and, what do you think, when his dinky cap came off in my hand, he was as bald as a post.

Now, you know Mike Grady isn't any stickler for what they call "Purity in Athletics." He hasn't any use for the gum-shoe man with the double-barreled, smokeless, hair-trigger fountain-pen, who bellyaches in his sporting magazine every time he snoops around and catches a young college sport accepting a meal ticket for playing summer ball. But it's going pretty

darned far when a high-school team, supposed to be made up of students in good standing, plays a man who has no hair to hang on to. There was another schoolboy on the team who was no tender youth. Every time he'd get the ball and run with it, a little kid on the front row of the grand stand would jump up and down and yell: "Papa! Papa!" But that was all right. I've no kick on him. He might be a *bona-fide* student in the law department for all I know. But that bald man—it wasn't sportsmanlike!

I was standing there watching the next play when, all of a sudden, the hairless wonder butts into me and knocks me down. Then everybody on both teams runs up and steps on me. I was kicked all the way from my ears to my big toe. After walking around on my stomach for a while, they all fell in a heap on my head and a whistle blew. I picked myself up and leaned against Wally.

"What's the matter?" I asked, sort of dazed.

"Matter?" he calls out. "They just made four yards through you."

"No," I says, "they went *over* me."

"Never mind that," snaps Wally; "buck up and hold your man."

Buck up and hold my man! My Golly! The next play I decided to stand up and see what was doing. I looked around and saw Wally about ten yards back of the bunch, squatting with his hands on his knees and watching us.

"Time!" I yells. "Time!"

They all stopped and the referee blew his whistle. "What's up?" he asks.

I turned to Wally. "What're *you* playing?"

"Never mind! Shut up and play the game!"

"But I will mind!" I yells. "What're you playing?"

"Full-back," he growls.

"That's mine!" I says. "I made a mistake the first time! It's full-back I want to play, not center."

Wally came up, hot as blazes, but calmed down and started to argue with me. He told me that the full-back had to work hard when the side was at bat; and to dig holes in the line with his head, and kick curves with the ball. We finally compromised by my playing tackle, and Bid Murphy going to center.

Tackle wasn't very much better. I was standing there watching the first play, and the fellow opposite me steps aside, and some duck from behind comes tearing through with the ball. His head caught me full in the bread-basket, and I was carried back about ten feet. When I got up Wally calls something at me I didn't quite catch.

"What's that?" I asks. "'Lay low,' did you say? Sure—I'm trying to!"

"Play low, I said! Duck 'way down, so they can't shove you back!"

The next time I bent 'way over. When the play started, the other tackle ups and sits on the back of my neck, and then eight or ten of 'em scrambled over me. After that I began to get wise. When I saw the bunch coming my way, I'd step back and give 'em room. Then I'd dance around the edge pulling hair.

On the quiet, that's the way to play football. Just keep away from the fellow with the ball, when he comes at you, and when the others stop him and commence to pile up and the whistle blows, just lie down on the edge of the heap. Then they'll all pile off,

but don't you get up till after everybody else does, and then real slow and painful like, as if your neck was broke. Limp around for a few seconds, and then take your position, dancing up and down and shaking your hair back from your eyes.

The game went on. Neither side did much, because everybody kept muffing the ball. By and by the referee blows his dinky whistle and calls time. We all trot off the field. I asked Wally if that was all.

"No," he said. "Just the first half."

"Did they beat us?" I asked.

"No score either side."

"Say, Wally," I said real low, "tell me one thing. What's the object of this game, anyway?"

He stopped and looked at me. "Don't you know?"

"Nary an idea."

He turned around and pointed to a couple of poles with a cross-piece tied to 'em.

"If we'd got the ball back of that goal, it would have counted five points."

I was mighty glad to know what we were trying to do.

In a few minutes they started again. The second half was about the same as the first; neither side did much. They would go like the dickens for a little while, and then some one would throw wild or muff the ball, and the other side would get it. I played the same wise game, acting busy, but keeping out of it, and pulling all the hair in reach.

After quite a spell of this sort of business, just as I was going to lie down on the edge of a play, I noticed the ball come shooting out and bounce twenty feet from the crowd. I remembered what Wally told

me, and saw my chance. Quick as a wink I ran and picked it up, and went tearing down the field for the posts Wally had pointed out to me. A big yell went up from the crowd, sudden and sharp, and then died down. Then it broke out again, louder and louder at every step I took. Out of the corner of my eye I could see them pouring out of the grand stand for the side-lines, screaming and throwing up their hats. Then I heard my name called in the midst of the other yelling; first by a few, then by more, until at last everybody was shouting: "Grady! Grady! Grady!"

I tell you it's a fine warm feeling that comes over you when you're doing yourself proud and the crowd starts to yell your name! I felt light and eager; all puffed up over winning the game, just as I used to feel when, ten years back, I'd lined out a homer for the old town team at Coshocton.

My breath began to give out—it was a lot farther than between bases. I cursed my fat and the shortness of my legs. Then I heard foot-beats behind me. That put fresh ginger into me; I forgot my fat and breathlessness—everything but those green posts coming nearer at every jump! I didn't look behind—that would lose time—I simply ran—ran—ran to the limit of my strength.

As I made my spurt the people went wild. They yelled that high, frantic screech that a crowd always lets out when it's gone plumb crazy over a game. I could see 'em hugging each other on the edge of the field; jumping on each other's shoulders and turning somersets. Just as I was about fifteen feet from the posts, some fool on the side-lines calls out, loud and clear above the noise of the crowd:

"Slide! Slide!"

I threw myself headlong and slid over the ground to the nearest post. Just as I touched it, I felt a hand on my ankle and knew that the fellow who had been chasing me and caught me, just too late!

I lay there panting, listening to the yells of the crowd. The players came running up with Connors in the lead. The umpire was patting the air down with outstretched hand and yelling: "Safe! Runner's safe!"

Then the fellow who had caught my ankle dragged himself to his feet.

"Safe?" he says. "Yes—Safety!"

I raised my head and looked at him. It was Wally Brown.

"What'd you say?" I panted. I was surprised. His tone showed clearly that he didn't appreciate my great play.

He wouldn't answer me, just walked away with his head down on his chest. He looked all broke up. I turned to the others.

"What's the matter?" I asked. "Don't my run count?"

"Yer bet it does!" said Bid. "Two points for de udder side! Yer ran de wrong way, see?"

THE BISHOP'S ROBES

BY GRAYSON M. P. MURPHY



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"**T**HER-RE be," remarked Sergeant Sullivan, "thr-ree ways av winnin' the schmiles av th' ordinary faymale—mockin' at other wimmin, shpendin' money, an' ticklin'. An' betwane us all an' the gate post, ticklin' is the chapest an' most aiqually sathisfactory."

"L" troop had gone back into bivouac on a hillside in a driving rain. The downpour had ceased as darkness settled down, and with the aid of half a snake fence "buscared" behind the Captain's back, the men had built a roaring fire about which they circled drying their clothes in the cheerful heat. Sergeant Sullivan, seated on his poncho, with his shoes off, was laboriously toasting his feet, one at the time, while he waved his blue shirt before him on the end of a stick. His remark on the gentle sex was elicited by a eulogy of the junior corporal—love-sick and drenched to the skin—on the sweet nature of the Colonel's cook.

"Hell, Sully," said the Quartermaster-Sergeant, a married man whose wife had a tongue with a regimental reputation, "what do you know about women anyhow?"

"More a dom sight norr any man should—wid

dacincy an' silf rayspict," returned the cynic sharply, "but, thank God, considherable less thin certain others av me acq'uentance not so far away but phwat they could be hit wid a cow if I had wan here be the tail to throw."

The Quartermaster-Sergeant reddened as a titter ran around the fire, but made no reply. Sergeant Sullivan felt his shirt carefully, shook his head, and resumed waving.

"I remimber, though," he said, "wan time long years since phwin, betwane two wimmin an' a bottle av booze I was dom near dhrove out av th' Ar-rmy into bein' a Bishop av the Prothestant Aypiscopal Church. Only for me quittin' av the job av me own fr-ree will, preferrin' the r-romance av a milithary carreer to th' aise av a palace wid all its attindint social beguilmints, I might now be mar-rchin' thr-rough life wid a crook an' a ring instid av ingloriously dhryin' me socks be a rail fire in quistionable coomp'ny."

"Go on, Sully, ye dom owld liar," remarked the First Sergeant affectionately, "ut's fower year since I've heard the tale—an' ut was thin ivvir gr-rowin' more r-raymarkable wid age."

Sergeant Sullivan laid down his shirt and lit his pipe.

"I was six year in the ser-vice thin," he began, "an' little more, be the nature av things, thin a rookie. But, if I do say ut meself—an' the top Sergeant will be afther bear-rin' me out—I was a fine figure av a young buck, tall, clane cut, sthraight as a r-rifle barril, an' wid a gr-reat black beard that was the jye av meself an' the invy av me frinds. I was but a privit, though—phwat wid wimmin an' booze I was ivvir acr-ross

the disk fr'm me throop commander, an' twict nothin' saved me from a bob-tail but the gr-race av God an' th' spick an' spannes av me kit an' car-rbine.

"At last, though, th' owld man got good an' sick av me nonsinse.

" 'Sullivan,' he says, shakin' his finger at me, 'dom your careless ways. I give ye war-rnin' now thot the nixt chance I git, I fir-re ye up befoore a Giniril Coort—an' out av th' ser-rvice ye'll go.'

"I saluted, sthiff as a r-ram rod, an' wid tears in me eyes—I was gittin' over a jag—I pr-romised enough rayforms to make a militia rigimint fit for service.

" 'Git out,' th' owld man says, says he, 'I'm weary wid your blarney. I'll have no more av ut. Give him two wakes' kitchin police, Sergeant,' says he.

"I sittled down to a calm, dacint life fer sivin days, but on the eighth, be the luck av the divvil, I wint into a wee cr-rap game wid sivinty-six cints—and came out wid thirty-nine dollars. Still I says to mesilf, 'Behave, Sully,' I says. 'Avoid timplation, Sully. Th' owld man ain't cool yit be the hell av a sight,' I says. So the nixt day, bein' Sathurday, I stharted off early in th' afthernoont for a walk in the woods about the post, to avide the lures av me aimiable frinds who would be sthartin' for town. Hardly, howivvir, was me foot off av the risirvation phwin I raymimbired thot I naded a hair-cut. I thin discovered I had, be misthake, put on me very best blue clothes, an' I had me thirty-nine oro in me pockit to kape ut safe from some pryin' thafe who might be buttin' into quarthers.

"So, much against me will, I tur-rned me rayluctant fate to the car line, an' was soon r-rollin' to town.

Ut was not until thin thot the thought av the throop barber cr-crossed me mind. 'But Hell,' I says, 'Hell, me fare is paid. The R-rubicon is cr-crossed,' I says. 'I'll simply shlip in—an' thin shlip out. I'm no wake-minded child nadin' av a nur-rse to kape me from throuble,' I says.

"All would hov wint well, I'm not doubtin'—but forninst the hair raiser's was a dope joint, and lanin' from the dure thereof phwin I dhismounthed from me conveyance worr thr-ree av me boosum frinds callin' to me be all the tokens av brotherly love.

"The sayquail I nade not r-relate until, in the state av a drame, I at last bruk through the swing dures an' navigathed acr-ross the strate into the bar-rber chair.

" 'Hair cut,' I says brief, an' fell aslape.

"Fr-rom a drame av love I was r-roused in a momint, ut samed.

" 'Shampoo?' asks the barber.

" 'Sure,' I says, an' fell to noddin' agin.

" 'Beard thrimmed?' comes nixt floatin' through me visions.

" 'Av coorse,' I tells him, 'everythin'!

" 'All over,' he says in an incr-redhibile brafe minit, 'nixt!

" 'Is there nothin' ilse you can do?' I asks, gravin' to lave the chair.

" 'You've had a hair cut—shampoo—beard thrimmed—shine—facial massage—an' hair singed,' he replies, 'bill two dollars an' fifteen cints.'

" 'I've thirty mor-re,' I says, 'give me a shave.' An' I sacr-rificed me jewel av a bear-rd for six minnits more rist in thot glor-rious throne.

"Howivvir at last wid gintle but firm assistance I rached the strate an' set on the cur-rb shtone in front to think av the sitooation. I was scarce sittled down phwin I hear-rd some wan callin' 'Soldier! Soldier!' I r-raised me eyes, an' ther-re, in a buggy befoore me was two ladies in phwhite and pink, wid big hats an' blue parasols. To me wandherin' gaze they looked like angils from Hivvin, though evints subsequent led me to belave thot me fir-rst impr-rissions worr erroneous. A young br-rave wid an oily black mustache was a dhrivin' av thim.

" 'Ladies!' I says, bowin' to thim as rayspictful as possible from me perch.

" 'Git in,' says the gir-rul in the hind sate.

"I was in no shtate to argue wid anny thing as unraysonin' as a faymale, so wid the aid av her an' the man, I climbed on boor-rd.

"Phwat happined nixt God knows—not I. I've a faint remimbrance av dhrivin' a long piece through the country, and singin' a dale wid me ar-rm about the lady beside me—an' par-rtakin' free an' aisy av a br-rown jug. An' thin av a suddin we sthopped in a wood—an'—iverythin' went out.

"Phwin I come to I was sthills in the woods, and I was aware of a splittin' pain in me head an' a tick-lin' as av a number av ants inside me blouse. I rached me hand out gintle for fear av dhisturbin' me head suddin—an'—Lord forgive me if I wasn't sthar-rk nakid lyin' in the brush. Clothes, cap, money, shoes—ivery bloomin' stitch I had thim two ladies an' their frind had shtole from me phwile I slept, an' lift me bar-re as a new bor-rn babe. Phwat worr me thoughts! Me garminits worr gone. I knew not

phwere I was. I had no way to measure the time. No doubt, though, the owld man was at thot very momint champin' av his teeth an' wr-ritin' out giniral char-rges to compass me bob-tail. I am not ashamed to say thot as I set ther-re wid me head splittin', the bugs pasturin' all over me person, an' not a rag on me, I was dom sad hombre. Avin me bear-rd was gone, though thot, as it tur-rned out lather, was a blessin' in disguise.

"I was settin' there, pondherin' like, phwin I hears a locomotive phwistlin', an' a thr-rain roarin' through the woods on me r-right. Near-rer an' near-rer ut came, an' at last ut passed widin a hundher yar-rds av me back, an' I heard ut blowin' an' slowin' up for a station. At fur-rst thot was a mather ov no in-therest. But in a little ut came to me thot phwere a station was there a man would be as well—an' I might inthrojooce meself an' borry a breech clout an' a pair av slippers, an' make me way home in the dhar-rk. Wid thot idea I r-rose, an' pickin' car-reful over the soft places, I made me way through the forrist until I came to the edge av ut—an' there, about fifty fate away, I saw befoore me no station but a wee flag shid, an' a fat rivirind gent, very hot an' mad-lookin', wid a shovel hat on his head an' a dhress-suit case in his hand. Seein' he was a priest, an' modist, I cr-crouched in the edge of the br-rush like a wild jack rabbit, an' hild me tongue. He seemed considherin' some heavy mather, an' at last, wid a face like a thundher cloud, he hides his dhress-suit case careful in the cor-rner av the shid, unbuttons his coat, an' stharts mar-rchin' off the road to the lift.

"I stayed hid, wid the gr-rass ticklin' av me person

most familiar, until he was ar-round the bind in the r-road. Thin, like a panthir, I stalked thot dhress-suit case and bust it opin. Phwat I tuk out was a caution—a full suit of the most gor-rgeous imbroid-hered icclesiasthical r-robcs, a pair av patint leather shoes, a mirror, a br-rush an' comb an' tooth br-rush, an' a bothle of rye phwhiskey.

“‘The divvil,’ I says. ‘But into thim, Sully. Bet-ther avin the sthripes av a modist zebra than your prisint promiscu’s undhress.

“‘An’ in two minnits I was arrayed in the full maj-esty av the uniform, an’ bein’ young an’ foolish, I couldn’t hilp pausin’ a momint to admire the showin’ I made in the mirror.

“‘I was ingaged in this plisint pursuit phwin suddin behind me came the beatin’ av hoofs on the r-road to the right, an’ turnin’, I saw bear-riñ’ down on me a magnificent carri’ge wid two hor-rsis an’ a coachman an’ tiger, an’ a fat lady in glasses lanin’ out av the side an’ wavin’ to me. Ther-re was no use r-runnin’ so I dhropped the mir-ror an’ stood attintion.

“‘The carri’ge shtopped. The tiger jumped down an’ opined the dure. The lady comes tumblin’ out.

“‘Oh, me dear Bishop!’ she says, r-runnin’ at me wid two fat jeweled meat hooks shtuck out: ‘I’m so, so sorry to be late. Will ye forgive me? Docthor Harcoat,’ she says, ‘was takin suddin wid wan av his sinkin’ spells,’ she says, ‘an’ he sint me to recave ye. He is dyin’ to see his owld frind agin,’ she says, ‘an’ befoore the ser-rvices this avenin’ he is countin’ talkin’ over a gr-reat dale wid ye,’ she says, ‘av vast spiritool inthrist to all av us.’

“‘I’m sorry the docthor’s ill,’ I says, ‘but don’t think me a bishop—’

“‘Thot’s just phwat Tom said!’ she cr-ried in delight. ‘He won’t be a Bishop, he said. He will nivvir put on a bit af diff’rince. You’ll know him as I know him, my dear. He’ll be just the same owld Dicky av ’67.’

“Wid thot she bundled me into the carri’ge. The tiger, viewin’ me garmints r-rayspictful, slung up me dhress-suit case, an’ off we sthorted wid cr-rackin phwips an’ r-ringin’ hoofs.

“‘I’m so glad ye wor-re your r-robcs,’ she says, ‘I nivvir saw a bishop in them befoore ixcipt in church,’ she says. ‘Phwat beauties they ar-re. Who made thim?’

“‘God knows,’ I said, chokin’ wid an emotion I can’t dhiscr-ribe.

“‘Ah, God indeed,’ she says, r-rollin’ her lamps. ‘The r-rewar-rd is thruly the dade an’ not the impty pr-raise.’

“‘Ye’ve the cow be the tail,’ I says, wantin’ to make an’ aisy r-raymar-rk, yit not quite gr-raspin’ her dhrift. I saw she had me tangled wid the rivirint file thot took the wrong r-road, an’ a natural imbar-rissmint clogged me wits. Ut’s bad enough to jump from a high privit to a bishop—but avin an owld ixperienced bishop would feel queer widout tr-rougies norr undhergarmints an’ the bugs makin’ merry all over his sacrid person. Divvil a bit did she mind though.

“‘We hov been havin such ear-rnist discussions lately—me husband an’ me,’ she says, ‘r-reghar-rdthin’ th’ Apostholic Succission.’

“‘Ut’s a subject admittin’ av much argymint,’ I says, seein’ I was due to say somethin’, ‘an’ wan thot touches the health an’ liberty av our childher.’

“‘I’m *so* glad to hear ye say so,’ she says. ‘Now just phwat is your views r-reghardin’ the naycessity av the doctrine?’

“Plainly diplomacy was me cue.

“‘Phwin takin’ judgmint,’ I says, ‘an’ thratid| wisely, ut is considhered be authorities the best yit. I will admit I see places mesilf phwere ut might be improved,’ I says, ‘but all the biships I know,’ I says, ‘ar-re for the owld-fashioned arthicle. We Biships is *very* conservathive,’ I says.

“She looked sort av surpr-rised, an’ sighed.

“‘I’m so ignorint,’ she says, ‘I can’t follow quite. Do you mean—’

“‘We worr intherruptid be a shar-rp cry, an’ the poundhin’ av hoofs. The carri’ge shtopped. A man puuls up on hor-rseback be the dure an’ shticks his head in. Sthrike me dead if ut wasn’t the owld man himsilf.

“‘I beg your pardon,’ he says, pullin’ off his cap an’ bowin’ terrible polite, ‘I’m lookin’ for a soldier av me throop supposed to be murdhered. Have ye seen anny signs av such a one?’

“‘I sthartid to salute, but me hand caught in me r-robcs an’ I couldn’t.

“‘Sorr,’ I says.

“‘He looked at me payculiar, but me bear-rd was gone, I was in the dhark av the carri’ge, an’ seein’ his face an’ r-raymimbrin’ av me prisint surroundin’s, I figured I would make a bit hay phwile the sun shone.

“‘Was he a tall, fine-lookin’ lad?’ I asks. ‘Beard-hed?’ I asks.

"'He was,' says th' owld man.

"'Of such is the Kingdom av Hivvin,' I says, cr-rossin' mesilf riverint.

"'Not be a dom sight!' busts in the Captain, an' thin he begs both our pardhons.

"'I seen such a youth,' I says, solim like, 'in blue unifor-rm, back near town, settin' in a house watch-in',' I says, 'be the only son av a widhow who was dyin' av faver. For long hours thot soldier had been a-settin' there phwin I lift, an' it's me honist opinion he's settin' there yit onliss the poor lamb he's a-watch-in' av has been gathered to the long flock.'

"Th' owld man sthared at me again till I near lost the comfort av me gor-geous r-robes an' me lady frind glarin' at him through a lornette.

"'Thank you, sir,' he says though at last, wid a choke in his thr-roat, an' pullin' back he r-rode on.

"'Phwere,' I says, turnin' to the lady, 'is the Post?'

"'Thr-ree mile, sthr-raight down this r-road. Thin tur-rn to your lift,' she says, 'an' wan mile more,' she says. 'Phwat worr ye doin' in town?' she says, spakin' like a judge advicathe.

"I turned suddin to the window.

"'Mercy,' I cr-ried, 'is thot the soldhier lyin' back there? Let me out!' I yelled. 'Shtop the coach!'

"They shtopped shor-rt. Out I wint wid a jump, me r-robes flyin' up ar-round me bare legs an' into the woods. Did I shtop agin? Not be a barril av r-rye. I r-run three mile widout pausin' for wind—an' thin, as the sun was goin' down, an' I was close to the Post, I shed all me outhar glor-ry—an' be dusk I snaked over number wan an' was r-resayved into the squad r-room wid open ar-rms, the rumor bein' currint

thot I was a bloody cadhaver, an' searchin' parthies huntin' me r-remains.

"The nixt mor-rnin' th' owld mon sinds for me.

" 'Absint agin, Sullivan,' he says, 'an'—shaved,' he says, wid a funny look comin' over his face. 'Phwere hov ye been?' he says.

" 'I was takin' a bit av divar-rshion wid some frinds,' I says, knowin' there was witnisses av me depar-rture wid the two ladies, 'an' I passed be a house phwer there was a poor woman weepin' in the dure. Her son was dyin', she says, an' wouldn't I watch be him—she was thot wor-re out, she says, she couldn't sthay awake any longer atall, atall. At fir-rst, mindhin' av the Captain's war-rnin', I was for ray-fusin', but her beggin' was thot pitiful, an' feelin' ut me duty as a Christian—which, I says, I know the Captin will be afther approvin'—wid gr-reat ray-luctance I set be thot poor lad till I come to r-rayport to the Fir-rst Sargint last night.'

"The Captin, he put his head in his hands like he was goin' to cr-ry. Phwin he looked up he was as rid as a bate.

" 'Sullivan,' he says, 'dommed if I can undherstand how you did ut. But I'm willin' to let ut go this time, not wishin' to thr-rifle wid mir-racles,' he says. 'But you mar-rk me wur-ruds—if ivvir ut happens agin—out ye go.'

" 'Captin, sorr,' I says. 'Be the gr-race av God ut nivvir will happen agin.'

"And I'm here to sthate," added Sergeant Sullivan thoughtfully, "thot I hov kipt me wur-rud. Ut nivvir has."

MISS TOOKER'S WEDDING GIFT

BY JOHN KENDRICK BANGS



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I

VAN BUREN tossed his gloves impatiently on the table, removed his overcoat, and sat down before the fire. He was apparently deeply concerned about something, for when Niki, his Japanese valet, entered the room and placed the whisky and soda on the little table at his side, Van Buren paid no more attention to him than he would to a vagrant sun-mote that crossed his path. Long and steadily he gazed into the broad fireplace, watching the dancing flames at play, pausing only to light his pipe, upon which he pulled fiercely. Finally he spoke, leaning forward and to all intents and purposes addressing the andirons.

"Confound the money!" he said impatiently. "I wish to thunder the Governor had left it to some orphan asylum or to found a Chair in Choctaw at some New England University, instead of to me—then I might have made something of myself. Here am I twenty-seven years old and all the fame I ever got came from leading cotillions at Newport, and my sole contribution to the common weal has consisted of the fines I've paid into the public treasury for exceeding

the speed limit. Life! I've seen a lot of it—haven't I, in this empty social shell I've been born into!"

He paused for a moment and poured a stiff four fingers of whisky into a glass at his side.

"Bah!" he shuddered as the odor of it greeted his nostrils. "You're a poor kind of fuel for such an engine as I might have been if I'd been started on the right track. By Jove! Ethel is right. What good am I? What have I ever done to make myself worth while or to show that I have any character in me that is a jot better than that of any of the rest of our poor stenciled, gold-plated society."

He looked at the glass and made a wry face.

"I'll cut *you* out anyhow," he said, pushing the liquor away from him. "That's something. Niki!" he called.

The inscrutable Niki obeyed the summons on the word.

"Take that stuff away and hereafter don't bring it unless I call for it," said Van Buren. "Any letters?"

"One," said Niki. "A messenger brought him at eight o'clock. I get it."

Niki went to the escritoire and picked up the little square of blue envelope lying thereon and handed it to Van Buren.

"Thank you, Niki. You may go now—I can get along without you until—well, say noon to-morrow. Good night."

"Good night," said Niki, and withdrew noiselessly.

"Humph!" ejaculated Van Buren. "Even he is worth more to the world than I am. He does something, even if it is only for me, which is more than I

can do. I don't seem to be able to do anything even for myself."

With a sigh of discontent, Van Buren poked the fire for a moment and then settled himself in the arm-chair, holding the letter before his eyes as he did so.

"From Ethel," he said. "Probably my death-warrant. Oh, well—why not? If she won't have me, she won't, that's all. Only one more drop of bitters in my cocktail. I may as well read it anyhow. It's like a cold plunge, and I hate to take it, but—here goes."

He tore open the envelope and, extracting the note, read it:

DEAR HARRY:

I have been thinking things over since you left me this afternoon and I have changed my mind. [Van Buren's eyes lighted with hope.] I *do* care for you, but I can not see much happiness ahead for either of us unless one or the other of us changes radically. It may be my fault, but I can not forget that if I married a man I should want always to be proud of him, and ambitious for his success in the world. If I were not ambitious, I could be proud of you just as you are, for I know you for the fine fellow that you are. While you do none of the things that I should love to have my future husband do, you at least do none of those other things that men make a practise of, and that mean so much misery for their womenkind, whether they show it or not. But, dear Harry, why can you not make yourself more of a man than you are? Why be content with just the splendid foundation, and let it lie, gradually disintegrating because you have failed to rear upon it some kind of a superstructure that would be in keeping with what rests beneath? You can—I know you can—and that is why I have decided to withdraw what appeared to be my final answer of this afternoon, and, if you want it, to give you another chance.

"If I want it!" ejaculated Van Buren. "Lord knows how I want it!"

Come to me at the end of a year and show me the record of something accomplished, that lifts you out this awful social rut we have all managed to get into, and my "no" of this afternoon may be turned into a "yes," and the misery of my heart be turned to joy. Of course you will say that it is all very easy for me to write this, and to tell you to go out and do something, but that the hard thing would be to tell you what to go out and do—and you will be perfectly right. General advice is the easiest thing in the world, but the specific, constructive suggestion is very different. So I will give you the specific suggestion, and it is this: Why do you not write a novel? You used in your days at Harvard to write clever skits for the "Lampoon," and one or two of your little stories in the "Advocate" showed that you at least know how to put words and sentences together in a pleasing way, even if the themes of your stories were slight and the plots not very intricate. Do this, Harry. Surely with your experience in life you can think of something to write about. Apply yourself to this work during the coming year, and when your book is published and has proven a success, come to me again, and maybe I shall have some good news to tell you.

It may be, dear Harry, that you will not think it worth while. For myself, I hardly think the prize is worth the winning, but you seem to feel differently about that, if I may judge from what you said this afternoon, and you *did* seem to mean it all, every word of it, you poor boy.

We shall meet, of course, as frequently as ever, but until the year is up, and that a year of achievement, you must not speak of the matter again, and must regard me as I shall hope in any event always to remain,

Your devoted friend,

ETHEL TOOKER.

Van Buren laughed nervously as he finished the letter, and again lit his pipe, which had gone out while he read.

"Write a novel, eh?" he muttered with a grin. "A nice, easy task that. A hundred and fifty thousand words, all meaning something. Ah me! Why the

'Dickens wasn't I born in an age when knighthood was in flower and my Lady Fayre set Sir Hubert some easy task like putting on a tin suit and going out on the highway and swatting another potted Sir Bedivere on the head with an antique ax? The Quest of the Golden Fleece was an easy stunt along side of writing a novel these times, and I fear I'm more of a Jason than a Henry James!"

He turned to his desk, and the next five minutes were devoted to the writing of an acknowledgment of Miss Tooker's letter.

I thank you for your suggestion [he wrote], and I truly think it will bear thinking over. Any suggestion that makes for the realization of my fondest hopes will bear thinking over, and I am going to do what I can. I wish you had set me an easier task, however, like getting myself appointed Ambassador to England, or Excise Commissioner, for honestly I do not feel the call of the pen. Nevertheless, my dearest Ethel, just to prove to you how honestly devoted to you I am, I shall to-morrow lay in a stock of pads, a brand new pen, and a new Roosevelt Dictionary to guide me into the short cut to success via the Reformed Spelling Route. I have already got my leading characters—my heroine and my hero. She is the sweetest, fairest, dearest girl in the world, and is to be named Ethel. The hero is to be a miserable, down-and-out young cub of a millionaire who, having been brought up in a hot-house atmosphere, never had a chance when exposed to the chilling blasts of the world. She, of course, will redeem poor Harry—that is to be my hero's name—from the pitfalls of bridge, Newport, and the demon Rum. And, of course, she will marry him in the end.

Ever your devoted

HARRY.

P. S. As expressive of my real feelings, my story will be written in blue ink.

II

Late one evening, six months later, Van Buren rose wearily from his desk, but with a light of triumph in his eye.

"There!" he said. "That is done. 'The City of Credit' is at last *un fait accompli*. One hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred and sixty-seven words, and all about Newport, with a bit of the life of its thriving suburbs, New York and Boston, thrown in to relieve the sordidness of it all."

He gazed affectionately at the pile of manuscript before him.

"It hasn't been half bad, after all," he said. "The first ten thousand words came like water from a fire hose, the second ten thousand were pure dentistry, tooth-pulling extraordinary, and the rest of it—well, it is queer how when you get interested in shoveling coal how easy it all seems. And now for the hardest end of the job. To find a publisher who is weak-minded enough to print it."

This indeed proved much the hardest part of Van Buren's work, for the reluctance of the large publishing houses of New York and Boston to place their imprint upon the title-page of "The City of Credit" became painfully evident to the youthful author. The manuscript came back to Van Buren with a frequency that was more than ominous.

"I think," he remarked ruefully to himself upon the occasion of its sixth rejection, "that I have discovered the principle of perpetual motion. If there were only enough publishers in the world to last through

all eternity, I could keep this manuscript going forever."

Days passed and with no glimmer of hope, until one morning at a time when "The City of Credit" was about due for its thirteenth reappearance on his desk Van Buren found in its stead a letter from Hutchins & Waterbury, of Boston, apprising him of the fact that his novel had been read and was so well liked that "our Mr. Waterbury will be pleased to have Mr. Van Buren call to discuss a possible arrangement under which the firm would be willing to undertake its publication."

"Good Lord!" cried Van Buren as he read the letter over for the third time, even then barely crediting the possibilities of success that now loomed before him. "And Boston people, too! Will I call! Niki, pack my suit-case at once, and engage a seat for me on the Knickerbocker Limited."

The following morning an interview between "our Mr. Waterbury" and Van Buren took place in the firm's private office on Tremont Street, Boston. It appeared that while the readers of the firm of Hutchins & Waterbury had unanimously condemned the book, Mr. Waterbury, himself, having read it, rather thought it might have a living chance.

"Some portions of your narrative are brilliant, and some of them are otherwise, Mr. Van Buren," said Mr. Waterbury frankly. "But considering the authorship of the book and that it is a description of Newport life by one who is a part of its innermost circle I am inclined to think it will prove interesting to the public. Your picture of the social wheels within

wheels is so intimate, and I judge so accurate, that it would attract attention."

"I am glad you think so," said Van Buren, with a dry throat—the idea that his book might be published after all was really overpowering.

"On the other hand, the judgment of our readers is so unanimously adverse that Mr. Hutchins and I feel the need of proceeding cautiously. Now, what would you say to our publishing the book on—ah—on your account, as it were?"

"You want me to—" began Van Buren.

"To pay for the plates and advertising," said Mr. Waterbury. "We will stand for the paper and the binding, and will act as your agents in the distribution of the book, accounting to you for every copy printed and sold."

"Is—is that quite *en règle*?" asked Van Buren dubiously.

"It is quite customary," replied Mr. Waterbury. "In fact, ninety per cent of our business is conducted upon that basis."

"I see," said Van Buren.

"You hand us your check for twenty-five hundred dollars to cover the expenses I have specified," continued the astute publisher, "and we will publish your book, allowing you a royalty of fifty per cent on every copy sold."

"I suppose the first edition would be—" said Van Buren hesitatingly.

"Five hundred copies," said Waterbury. "The smaller your first edition, the sooner you are likely to go into a second, and, as you know, it is a great advantage for a book to go into a second edition

quickly, if only for advertising purposes. Think it over, and let me know this afternoon if you can. I have to leave for Chicago to-night, and if we are to have 'The City of Credit' ready for the autumn trade, we should begin work on it right away."

"I understand," said Van Buren. "Well—I—I guess it's all right. It's only the principle of the thing—but if, as you say, it is quite customary—why, yes. I'll give you my check now. Do you want it certified?"

"That will not be at all necessary, Mr. Van Buren," said Waterbury magnanimously. "We are quite aware that your own signature to a check is a sufficient certification."

The afternoon train for Newport carried Van Buren back to the social capital with a contract in his pocket, signed by Messrs. Hutchins & Waterbury, assuring the early publication of "The City of Credit," but in view of certain of its financial stipulations, jubilant as he was over the success of his first real step toward fame, Van Buren did not show it to Miss Tooker, as he might have done had it contained no reference to a check on the Tenth National Bank of New York calling for the payment of two thousand five hundred dollars to the Boston firm of publishers.

III

IN September "The City of Credit" was published, and widely advertised by Messrs. Hutchins & Waterbury, and Van Buren took particular pains to secure the first copy from the press and to send it by mes-

senger with a suitable inscription and a note to Miss Tooker.

"I send you my book," he wrote, "not because I think it is worth reading, but for the double purpose of showing you that I have tried my best to fulfil your wishes, and to assure the work of at least the circulation of one copy. It has all of my heart in it."

For one reason or another, doubtless because there were quite five hundred other novels of a similar character put forth about the same time, by the end of October the world had not yet been consumed by any conflagration of Van Buren's lighting.

"The book hangs fire," said Mr. Waterbury when Van Buren called upon him at his Boston office to inquire how things were going. "We printed five hundred copies, and this morning's report shows two hundred and thirty still on hand. A hundred and sixty were sent for review."

"I wish they hadn't been," said Van Buren, with a rueful smile. "They have provided just one hundred and sixty separate pieces of fuel for the critics to roast me with. Have there been any favorable reviews of the book?"

"None that I have seen—but don't you worry about that," replied Mr. Waterbury comfortingly. "It's the counting-room, not the critics, that tell the story. Something may happen yet to pull us out."

"What, for instance?" asked Van Buren.

"Oh, I don't know," said Waterbury. "You might do something sensational and get it in the papers. That would help. It's up to you, Mr. Van Buren."

"I guess I'm all in," said Van Buren to himself as he walked down Tremont Street. "Up to me to

do something—by Jove!" he interrupted himself abruptly. He had suddenly espied a copy of "The City of Credit" in a shop window. "Up to me, is it? Well, I think I shall rise to the occasion and not by doing anything sensational either."

He entered the shop.

"I want six copies of 'The City of Credit,' " he said quietly to the salesman. "It's a first class story. Much of a demand for it?"

"No," said the salesman. "We have only the window copy, and we've had that over a month. I can get them for you, however."

"All right," said Van Buren. "Just send them to Charles H. Harney, The Helicon Club, New York. I'll pay for them now."

Van Buren paid his bill, and, returning to the street, hailed a hansom.

"Take me to some good book-shop," he said to the cabby.

Instantly he was whirled around into Winter Street, where stands one of Boston's most famous literary distributing centers.

"Have you 'The City of Credit'?" he asked the salesman.

"I think we have a copy in stock," replied the latter. "If we haven't, we can get it for you."

"Do so, please," said Van Buren. "I want a dozen copies—send them by express to Charles H. Harney, The Helicon Club, New York. How much?"

"It's a dollar and a half book, I think," said the clerk. "The discount will make it \$1.20—a dozen, did you say? Twenty-five cents expressage—that will make it \$14.65."

Van Buren paid up without a whimper. Once in the hansom again, he called up through the little hole in the top.

"Isn't there any other book-shop in town where I can get what I want?" he demanded.

"There's a dozen of 'em," replied the cabby.

"Then go to them all," said Van Buren.

That night when Van Buren started for New York he had purchased a hundred and fifty copies of "The City of Credit," and had ordered them all to be addressed to the clerk at the Helicon Club, with whom, upon his arrival in town, he arranged for their immediate reshipment to the Harrison Safety Deposit Storage Company on Forty-second Street.

"I'm going to have my happiness, if I have to buy it," Van Buren muttered doggedly, as he crept into bed shortly after midnight. And then, tossing sleeplessly in his bed and at last rejoicing in the possession of his late father's millions to back him in his enterprise, he laid the foundations of a plan comparable only to that of the Wheat King who corners the market, or the man of Cotton who loads himself up with more bales of that useful commodity than all the fertile acres of the South could raise in seven seasons. Orders were despatched by wire and by mail to all the book-sellers in the land whose names and addresses Van Buren could get hold of. Department stores were put under contribution and their stock commandeered, and one of the biggest booms in the whole history of literature set in.

"The City of Credit" went into its second, fifth, twentieth, fiftieth large edition. Hutchins & Waterbury wrote Van Buren stating that a sudden turn in

the market had made his book one of the six best sellers not only of this century but of all centuries. Their presses were seething to the point of white heat with the copies of "The City of Credit" needed to supply the demand; their binders were working day and night with a doubled force, and their shipping department was pretty nearly swamped with the strain put upon it. "Your royalty check on January 1st will be the fattest in the land," wrote Waterbury in a moment of enthusiasm. "We are thinking of sending our staff of readers to the lunatic asylum and getting an entirely new set. An order for four thousand has come in from Chicago this morning. St. Louis wants fifteen hundred, and pretty nearly every other able-bodied town in the country is asking for from one to one hundred and fifty." By Christmas time, if the publishers' announcements were to be believed, "The City of Credit" had attained to the enormous sale of three hundred and fifty thousand, and Van Buren was in receipt of a letter from a literary periodical asking for his photograph for publication in its February issue. This brought him a realization of the fact that he might now fairly claim to be considered a literary success. At any rate, he felt that he had now a right to approach Miss Tooker with a fair prospect of receiving from her a favorable answer to the question which she had a year before left an open one.

And events showed that his feeling was justified, for two days later he enjoyed the blissful sensation of finding himself the accepted lover of the woman he had tried so hard to please.

"Is it to be—yes?" he whispered, as they sat together in the conservatory of her father's city house.

"It has—always been—yes," she replied softly, and then what happened is not for your eyes or mine. Suffice it to say that Van Buren moved immediately from sordid old New York to become a dweller in the higher altitudes of Elysium.

Incidentally the boom in "The City of Credit" stopped almost as suddenly as it had begun. There was nobody apparently who felt called upon to throw in the necessary number of dollars to sustain an already over-stimulated market, which puzzled Messrs. Hutchins & Waterbury exceedingly. They had hoped to live for the balance of their days upon the profits of their World's Best Seller.

IV

As the spring approached and the day set for Miss Tooker's wedding to Van Buren came nearer, the latter found himself daily becoming more and more a prey to conscience. There was a decidedly large fly in the amber of his happiness, for as he viewed the part he had played in the forced success of "The City of Credit" he began to see it in its true light. The first of March brought him his royalty check from Hutchins & Waterbury, and it was, as had been predicted, gratifyingly large, and reduced materially what he had called his "campaign expenses." In the same mail, however, was a bill from the Storage Company, in one of whose spacious chambers there reposed more copies of his novel than he liked to think of—over 250,000—the actual sales had been 260,000 in spite of the published announcements of a higher figure. The firm had thirty or forty thousand on hand, printed in

a moment of confident enthusiasm when the flurry was at its height. Both communications brought before Van Buren's mind's eye all too vividly the specter of his duplicity, and he was too much of a man of conscience to be able to put it lightly aside. He tried to console himself with the idea that all is fair in love and war, but he could not, and his remorse caused him many a sleepless night. Finally—it was on the eve of the posting of the wedding invitations—scruple overcame him, and he resolved that he could not honestly lead his bride to the altar with such a record of deceit upon his escutcheon, especially in view of the fact that it was through this deceit that his happiness had been won.

"It is better to lose her before the ceremony than after it," he told himself, and, bitter though the confidence might be, he made up his mind to tell Miss Tooker everything. "Only, I must break it gently," he observed.

With this difficult errand in mind, he called upon his fiancée, and, after the usual greeting, he started in on his confession. He had hardly begun it, however, when his courage failed him, and with the oozing of that his words failed him also. He did have the courage, however, to seek to reveal the exact situation in another way.

"Ethel dear," he said, awkwardly fumbling his gloves, "I want to show you something. I have a—a little surprise for you."

The girl eyed him narrowly.

"For me?" she said.

"Yes," he answered. "The fact is, it's—it's a sort of wedding present I have for you, and I think

you ought to see it before—well, *now*. Will you go?”

Miss Tooker was interested at once, and, taking a hansom, they were driven to the Harrison Storage Warehouse on Forty-second Street. Arrived there, Van Buren led her to the elevator and thence up to the small room in which lay the corroding and tell-tale packages—an enormous bulk—that were slowly but surely eating up his happiness.

“Why, Harry!” she cried as she gazed in bewilderment at the huge pile of unopened bundles. “Are these all for me?”

“Yes,” gulped Van Buren, his face flaming.

“But—what do they contain?” she asked.

“Two hundred and fifty thousand copies of my—my book—‘The City of Credit,’ ” said Van Buren, his eyes cast down.

“You mean that you—” she began.

“Yes, it’s exactly that, Ethel. I—I bought ’em all to—well, to boom the sales and to—make a name for myself in the world,” he said sheepishly, “or rather for you—but I suppose now that you know—”

“Then all this tremendous sale was arranged between you and your publishers to deceive me?” she asked.

“Not at all,” protested the unhappy Van Buren. “On the contrary, I did it all myself. Hutchins & Waterbury don’t know any more about it than you did an hour ago. No one knows—except you and I.”

Van Buren paused.

“I could not let you marry me without knowing what I had done,” he said. “It would not be fair to—to our future.”

"Tell me all about it," she said quietly, and Van Buren made his confession complete. He told her of his interview with Waterbury—how the latter had told him his book had fallen flat; how it was "up to him" to do something; how a sight of a single copy of "The City of Credit" in the Tremont Street shop window had tempted him first into a retail fall which had grown ultimately into a wholesale "crime"—as he put it. He did not spare himself in the least degree, humiliating as the narration of his story was to him.

"I suppose it is all up with me now," he said ruefully, when he had finished.

"I don't know," said Ethel quietly. "I don't know, Harry. Perhaps. Take me home, please. I want to show you something."

The drive back to the Tooker mansion was taken in silence. Van Buren despised himself too strongly to be able to speak, and Miss Tooker had fallen into a deep reverie which the poor fellow at her side feared meant irrevocable ruin to his hopes.

"Come in," said Miss Tooker gravely, as the cab drew up at the house. "I want to take you up into our attic storeroom, and then ask you a plain question, Harry, and then I want you to answer that question simply and truthfully.

Marveling much, Van Buren permitted himself to be led to the topmost floor of Miss Tooker's house.

"Look in there," said she, opening the door of the storeroom. "Do you see those packages?"

"Yes," he said. "They look very much like mine, only they're fewer."

"Do you know what they contain?" she asked.

"Books?" queried Van Buren, entering the room and tapping one of the bundles.

"Yes—yours—your books—five thousand three hundred and ten copies of 'The City of Credit,' Harry," she said, with a rueful smile.

"You—" he ejaculated hoarsely.

"Yes, I bought them all. Some in Newport, some in New York, some at Lenox—oh, everywhere! Now, tell me this," she interrupted. "Do you suppose that I would condemn you for doing on a large scale what I have been doing on a smaller scale ever since last November?"

A ray of hope dawned in Van Buren's eyes.

"Ethel!" he cried, seizing her by the hand. "You bought all those—for me?"

"I certainly did, Harry," she said quietly. "With my pin money and my bridge money and all the other kinds of money that I could wheedle out of my dear old daddy. But answer me. Have I the right to sit in judgment on you—"

"Not by a long shot!" cried Van Buren. "It would be an act of the most consummate hypocrisy."

"That is the way I look at it, dear," she whispered, and then—well, all I have to say is that I don't believe anything like what happened at that precise moment ever happened in an attic storeroom before.

And the wedding invitations were mailed that very evening.

MADemoisELLE PARChESI

BY GELETT BURGESS



MADemoiselle PARCHESI

BY GELETT BURGESS

JUSTIN STURGIS had missed the *Veendam* by an hour. The next vessel of the line would not touch at Boulogne-sur-Mer until Saturday. He had still three days to wait, and he was already bored with the town. The Casino was closed, so, after whiling away the most of the morning at the fish market, he had struck out for the beach and walked along the sands below the Boulevard. A half-mile beyond the deserted bathing-machines he sat down on the shingle, and abstractedly watched the gulls circling about a huge rock which rose from the water between the limits of ebb and flood tide.

It was in April, too early in the season for tourists or "trippers" from England, and the whole reach of shore was deserted, save for an occasional fish-wife shrimping, knee-deep in the water, framed in a glittering perspective of sea, sand, and sunshine.

His wandering eye was arrested, after a time, by a patch of red that appeared and disappeared in the breakers which lazily washed the beach. After a closer examination, Justin rose and waded into the water to retrieve this bit of flotsam. It was a red silk parasol, caught by the rising tide, filled with sand and laced with the foam of the billows.

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He opened it, set it upright in the sun to dry, burying its ivory handle in the pebbles, and then walked curiously down the beach, inspecting the sands. A little beyond where he had been sitting, he encountered a double line of footprints leading to and from a confused impression in the beach. There was a small hole scooped out by hand, half-filled with water, and from this abandoned resting-place the footprints led down to the foamy seaweed, as if the owner had escaped by way of the open sea. As the tide was rising, Justin surmised that the owner of the parasol had been there some time before, and would probably return to seek her lost property; and he saw in this chance, hope of an adventure. It was, however, by this time nearly noon, and the thought of luncheon constrained him to hide his discovery and return as soon as possible. He concealed the sunshade, therefore, beneath a ledge, and made his way back to his hotel.

He found the *salle à manger* occupied by a party of two, who were taking their *déjeuner* at a table not far from his, by an open window. The elder woman was dressed in black, and her manner and conversation betrayed the patient chaperon of a whimsical ward. Justin's eyes slipped over her face and figure lazily, and passed on to the young girl opposite her. Only her back was visible, unfortunately, but from its lines, the curve of her cheek, and a coil of well-dressed hair he formed an interested estimate of her charms, which was soon justified by the reflection of her face in a conveniently placed mirror. It was not long before the young lady, who had not been altogether oblivious of his entry, discovered this go-between also, and she sent a swift glance occasionally into the glass, not one

of which shots missed its mark. Her face and expression gave her a mischievous original sort of beauty, so much her own as to preclude any hints as to her nationality. The two women were speaking French, engaged in an animated conversation, plainly audible from where the young man sat.

Never did Justin Sturgis more painfully regret his ignorance of the French language, for he could not read even a *menu*. A few words, indeed, he knew, and *ombrelle* sounds remarkably like an English word of similar significance. It was not long, then, before he made sure that his find on the shore might be put to good advantage, and he swore to himself that it would be redeemed only at the price of the girl's acquaintance.

As soon as he had made sure that she had left the hotel, Justin set out himself, and, making a detour at a rapid pace, reached the shore and recovered the parasol. Then, opening it, he stretched himself at full length under its shade and pretended to fall asleep. In a few moments he heard the crunching of pebbles, and, turning cautiously, he saw the young lady from the hotel picking her way among the boulders. By the time he had composed his features she had come up to him.

"*Pardon, monsieur,*" she said, in excellent French, "but I perceive that you have my parasol."

The words, of course, were incomprehensible to Justin. He was, moreover, supposed to be asleep. He tightened his grip on the ivory ring in the handle and tried to keep from smiling, but an imp of mischief was torturing him internally.

"*Monsieur!*" the girl exclaimed impatiently—and that was as much as Justin understood, though there

followed a number of sentences, volubly spoken and emphasized with a stamp of the little foot whose shoe-prints he had admired that forenoon.

Justin rose now, made her an elaborate bow, and handed her the sunshade. These signs, however, seemed to him so inadequate that he spoke in English, on the chance of her understanding him. "I beg your pardon, *mademoiselle*, for a rather poor joke, but, as I have only just found your property, I was waiting to see if you would have the courage to claim it. Do you speak English?"

The girl's eyebrows had risen for a second, and she bit her lip. Her brown eyes gave him a swift look-over, from his shoes, which were pointed, to his hair, which was parted in the middle. "*Non*," she said, swallowing a smile; "*monsieur ne parle pas Français?*"

"No," Justin answered in his turn; and at this illumination of the situation, they both broke into laughter, than which, perhaps, there could be no better introduction.

Now, some premonition had warned Justin, as he descended the hill, to stop at the *pâtisserie* and buy an assortment of cakes, which he had brought with him down to the shore. So, at a loss for words, in the hopes of detaining her as long as possible, he offered her the package, seated himself on the sand, and beckoned her an invitation. The girl accepted frankly, and, spreading a tiny handkerchief, she arranged the *gâteaux* upon it, for the repast.

There were coffee *éclairs*, suffering a little from the torment of the rapid trip, and *puits d'amour*, whose shaking custard hearts were torn by the same commotion; two *tartelettes*, one of whose boatload of straw-

berry passengers had capsized; and a couple of *babas*, sweet little sponges, saturated with rum-and-water—the favorite confection of the American girl in Paris. She relieved the agony of the *éclair*s, staunching their creamy wounds with a slim forefinger; she pated and petted the other cakes into shape; and waved her hand merrily over the spread, with a gesture of approval. She then signed to Justin that all was ready and helped herself to a *baba*, which disappeared between her lips in a mumble of delight. It was enough for Justin to sit and watch her legerdemain, but she forced a cake upon him, that he might share her delight.

When they had finished eating, the young man set himself to the rather difficult task of amusing her, with an impromptu conversation without speech. He pointed to the sea and sky with gesticulations of admiration, and the girl evidently approved of the landscape, sea-scape, and weather. She helped on the dialogue in high spirits by pointing to the gulls, expressing a wish to fly by waving her arms vertically, and her ability to swim by horizontal motions. She called his attention to the fishing smacks, and, sailing in an imaginary boat, of which she seemed to hold sheet and tiller, she made a most successful voyage across the Channel. Justin himself preferred riding, and he mimicked a horse's gallop and trot till the girl wept with laughter, and so they responded in kind, one following the other. She proved herself a clever actress, willing to amuse as well as be amused by the drollery of their ridiculous pastime.

The acquaintance, now well under way by the adoption of this language of signs, progressed gaily. The young lady was evidently mistress of her own time,

and the whim pleased her. It was not long before the two were playing together like two children, building forts in the sand, pelting each other with rags of seaweed, and making rainbow mosaics of colored pebbles. They walked a mile or so up the beach and back again frolicking ingenuously, full of the joy of the warm spring afternoon sunshine, and captivated with the innumerable absurdities of their original relation and intercourse.

One of their earliest attempts at diversion was in the contrivance of a make-shift game of parchesi, the diagram for which Justin drew in lines upon the sand. The girl recognized the circles, ladders, and "safety-points" immediately, and with her white pebbles for counters, proved herself well skilled in the rules of the game, and a difficult antagonist in the race around the square into the "home circle." Partly on account of her luck with his wooden dice, and partly for want of a better name, since she would not tell him hers, he began to call her "Mademoiselle Parchesi," and this pseudonym she kept as long as their acquaintance lasted.

Both, indeed, had so entered into the spirit of the game, and had devoted themselves with such energy to the contrivance of new methods of communication, that four hours passed rapidly, and six o'clock found them by the fish market, well fatigued with their romp. It was time to return for dinner, but Justin had no idea of letting the excitement die here. Much to his chagrin, however, the young lady absolutely forbade his accompanying her to the hotel, and, with a decided gesture, intimated that he must not even recognize her there.

This was a difficult message to communicate, and she accomplished it only after an elaborate pantomime, requiring many simulated scenes. She acted out several possibilities, taking his part with clever parody—where she approved his behavior she applauded enthusiastically, clapping her hands high in the air; where she made him commit an indiscretion she stamped her foot pettishly, and hissed her condemnation of his *rôle*. In this manner she succeeded in laying out the course of action he was to follow, and he was given to understand that her *duenna* was all but an ogress, and that even his by-play in the mirror would bring about the most unpleasant consequences.

She agreed to come down to the beach every afternoon without fail, and in the mornings as well, whenever she was given the opportunity. Justin, however, must ask neither her name, residence, nor age, and he must never—*jamais*—try to find out. She liked him, yes, she liked him very much—especially his hair, which was dangerously curly—and if he were good she would give him a photograph to put in his watch, though she insinuated with a fluttering finger that it would not stay there long. They were to be good friends for three days, if he obeyed her wishes; after that—an affected little shrug of her shoulders, a glance upward, and a handkerchief held to very dry brown eyes, intimated her despair. All this in the most fascinating play-acting, distracting in the extreme.

This was the beginning of a three-days' comradeship, half child's play and half flirtation, more piquantly amusing than anything Justin Sturgis had ever before attempted. Mademoiselle Parchesi was ready for any

entertainment he might suggest, lithe-limbed and graceful, delighting in constant action, and swept at times by a gale of merriment for which he could discover no reason.

They got on, for the most part, by means of the language of signs that they had first adopted, and which they added to, more and more, every time they met, by the acceptance of significant conventions, instinctive as the motions of savages or deaf mutes. The few words common to both French and English, such as *hôtel, train, dîner, chocolat, poste, télégraphe, photographie, lettre, voyage*, and so forth, they found very convenient, and by these they avoided the necessity of many a long rehearsal in pantomime. As a last resort Justin would sometimes refer to his French-English, English-French dictionary, but this came to be understood as unfair and against the rules of the game they were playing; and the girl would vigorously protest against the consultation. Justin's note-book played a good part, too, in their interviews, and before he left her it was completely filled with their almost impossible sketches.

All this did well enough for the simpler conditions of their friendship, but Justin's increasing admiration for his playfellow engendered many ideas too abstract for this limited means of communication, even when he wished to confess his thoughts. He revolted occasionally against the obstacle of his ignorance, which shut him out of her thoughts, as by an insurmountable wall, and at these times he relieved his mind with a few sharp sentences in English, expressing himself with a force he might not have dared use had he thought he were understood. At other times, how-

ever, this very barrier gave him protection, and the belief in his comrade's ignorance of English emboldened him to speak naively with immense candor, breaking out into fearless phrases of whimsical expostulation, speculation, or open compliment.

"You're the most delicious sort of a gamin," he would say, "a new kind to me—I don't know just where to place you. . . . I wonder how many of the girls I know would stand the test of not being allowed to talk for three whole days! . . . If you *could* speak English, I wonder what you'd say! You'd probably bore me to death, or else insist on talking personalities. . . . What sort of funny things would come out of that funny face? . . . It's always a surprise to me when people appear to like me, but I'm pretty sure you really do, or you wouldn't take so much trouble to come down here with me. . . . Perhaps it's only the novelty of the thing, though. . . . I'm sure I wouldn't get tired of you, though, for a long time. . . . I suppose, now, you think you dress well, but you don't. You oughtn't to wear red. You ought to wear blue. . . . You've got such a funny mouth—but it's a good, generous one. . . . I wonder if you blackened your eyebrows this morning? . . ."

Mademoiselle Parchesi schooled herself assiduously; when he talked she paid close attention, and always laughed as if she was sure he was saying something amusing. In fact, it seemed to Justin that she laughed more at his remarks, seriously as they were spoken, than at her own, which, by the token of her expression, must have been decidedly witty. She attempted a little English occasionally, mouthing the words very prettily, with a French accent, but sometimes she would also

speak her mind, and deliver a few rapid incomprehensible sentences quite deliberately, looking at him through half-closed lids, and smiling as she turned away. Her eyes wrinkled pleasantly as she did this, and her mouth was apt to become unmanageable, while her eyebrows went up and down—what Mademoiselle Parchesi was thinking of, Justin would have given a good deal to know.

The tender meeting the *Obdam* was to leave the jetty at eight o'clock Saturday evening; that afternoon, therefore, was the last time that the two could meet, and the three hours on the beach below the Boulevard were well filled with their sports and nonsense.

It seemed rather cruel to Justin that such an experience as this new friendship should come to an end without some trace of regret on the part of his new-made friend, but nothing he could do succeeded in drawing from Mademoiselle Parchesi any expression of concern at the approaching separation, and she obviously parried his advances in this direction. This hurt him a good deal. It was inconsistent with the estimate he had formed of her character to be so unfeeling, for she had always been frank and sympathetic before, in all their meetings.

He threw off this feeling of disappointment as well as he could, nevertheless, and determined to make the best of this last opportunity of seeing her. He had had three days of unconventional, almost primitive, comradeship with her, happily without a hint of discord. He would not spoil that now by a disagreement. He was very glad to have been able to know her, even for this short interval. He had no hope of ever see-

ing her again, and so he gave himself up to the pleasure of this last time.

They walked up the beach more quietly than usual, and by five o'clock reached the place where they had first met. The shore was deserted, and they sat down together, with a little embarrassment, the tension of their approaching farewell asserting itself in spite of Mademoiselle Parchesi's nervous attempts at raillery. These she gave up after a while, and sat quietly gazing at the sea.

Justin looked at the girl narrowly and wondered what was behind her silence. It was some time before he could pull himself together enough to say good-by, and then the old difficulty confronted him; the barrier of language, never so exasperating, never so insurmountable as now, alone with her in the gathering dusk of sky and sea—for the last time. Again the temptation to free his mind was too great to be resisted.

"I can't stand it! I won't stand it!" he said. "The idea of being here with a girl like you, whom I shall probably never see again in my life, and not able to talk to you! By Jove, I *will* talk to you, whether you understand or not! You're my kind; we are of the same caste. I know it by every gesture you make. There ought to be a universal language for people like us. I ought to be able to understand what you say, if you spoke Arabic, on a day like this! And I could make myself worth your while, I'm sure of that—I feel remarkably interesting, and I'm not afraid to tell the truth about either myself or you. But what's the use? You're a mummy—you're a ghost—you're deaf and dumb! *Grrrrr!*" He growled the last ejaculation of dissatisfaction through clenched teeth.

Mademoiselle Parchesi certainly did not look like either a ghost, a mummy, or a deaf-mute, for she sat up straight, clapped her hands and cried, "*Encore! encore!*" laughing nervously.

It seemed foolish to Justin to go on so, talking to himself in this ridiculous way, but there was something in the girl's attention that encouraged him, he hardly knew why. More than this, a finer sense of the humorous possibilities of the case awakened in him. He went on with his monologue, speaking more to himself than to her.

"I'd like to know who you are! I don't mean your name and residence, but who you *really* are—who you are to me, and what it means, my meeting you like this!"

Mademoiselle Parchesi did not attempt to reply, but sat back, watching his profile outlined against the sky. She seemed more serious than she had ever seemed before, more serious even than the occasion demanded. She no longer said, "Vat ees eet?" in broken English. Her hands were tightly clasped together, and her teeth were set on her lower lip. Justin gazed at her as if she were a portrait.

"You've got such a funny face," he continued. "You're not a bit pretty, but you've got what not one woman in ten has, and that's a personality. No one would ever forget *you*! There's something in behind your face that turns the lights up and down, and sets off red and green fire, and stage-manages your whole expression. Let me see your hand!" and he reached for it assuredly.

She gave it him a little reluctantly, and he inspected it at his leisure. "H'm!" he murmured, in a manner

that palmists use. "What a headline! You're in no danger from that two inches of heart. . . . You'll live to be eighty-six years old. . . . Yes, you'll be married. . . . How would you like to be married—to me?"

Mademoiselle Parchesi's hand curled almost imperceptibly, but Justin did not release it. He turned it over, felt of the phalanges, tested the density of the flesh and the smoothness of the skin. There were little pads on the end of her fingers, where the tactile nerves were concentrated. These he pinched softly.

"These fool palmistry books give you a sort of map with little mountains and gulfs and rivers and peninsulas to guide one in exploring the human hand, but they don't help one much about a person's climate and meteorology—storms and winds and tides and currents and all that. It's all that that I'd like to know. I wonder what sort of a friend you'd be. I wonder how you'd wear, and if I'd get tired of you, or you of me!"

There is no word for "wonder" in French; if there were, Mademoiselle Parchesi might have used it then, also, for she looked up suddenly as if to speak, and her eyes were full of a message she was trying to find the courage to say. But she looked down again passively and reclasped her hands, saying, "*Encore!*" under her breath.

"I suppose," said Justin through his teeth, "if I were a certain sort of man, I would try to kiss you now, and if you were a different sort of girl, you would let me, after more or less stage business. Here's a *mise-en-scène* appropriate enough for any sort of a flirtation. I wonder if I *am* that sort of man."

He rose and paced up and down the sand a few mo-

ments, thinking over the situation so intensely that he was almost oblivious of the girl's presence. In her manner a few hints had begun to trouble him with a suggestion that, at first, he could not determine. He turned to her and saw that she was watching him intently. She had drawn on her cape as if preparing to leave. He went up to her quickly, with a flash of intuition, and standing still, said, deliberately, "I believe I *will* kiss you, and see what good that will do!"

He had made no suggestive motion, but as soon as the words had left his mouth Mademoiselle Parchesi started up and took a step away from him, and stood in an attitude of defense. Her face had gone scarlet, and her hands were raised to her breast.

With a rapid gesture he seized her by both arms and looked her straight in the eyes. "You speak English!" he cried, angrily. "You have understood every word I have said from the very beginning, and you've deliberately let me go on talking like a fool. You've tricked me, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" Then with a toss of his head he left her standing there, her hands covering her face, and walked away.

What had he said to her? Nothing of consequence perhaps, nothing at least he was ashamed of, but the feeling that he had been played with and led on for so long a time aroused a lively resentment. How stupid he had been not to have suspected her! But it had not entered his mind to doubt the girl after her first words. Her face had told him nothing of her nationality; she was only herself, Mademoiselle Parchesi, his three-days' friend—it seemed like three months! The recollection of her original escapades

softened him, and a saving sense of humor came to her rescue, overthrowing all his annoyance. Certainly she had been as clever as he had been dull, and in a few moments he had acknowledged it to himself.

There was a rustling of silk skirts behind him, and he had but time to resume his mask of resentment when a hand was laid on his arm.

"I'm very sorry!" Mademoiselle Parchesi was saying, very softly; "I am ashamed of myself, and I apologize."

She looked up at him shyly through a little dew of tears. "But it was so funny, it was so *terribly* funny! I tried to tell you so many, many times, really I did, but you were so awfully sure I was French; I couldn't help going on with the joke! And when you began saying things you really meant, so frankly, I couldn't resist the temptation to let you go on, though I knew I was no better than an eavesdropper. I've been in Paris for three years at a French *pension*, and it's so long since I've had any one say real things to me. You were so perfectly dear and genuine and absurd, and I was afraid you'd stop it all if you thought I understood. I have never heard a man really talk to himself before, and it fascinated me. I understood what you meant, all the time, I'm sure I did, but now you'll think I'm a horrid little minx! But I don't care, it was terrible funny! Wasn't it?"

They laughed together as they had laughed when they first met. "I'll forgive you," Justin said, as they turned down the beach, "if you'll tell me whether I am to consider all this an episode or an event."

"You're going to leave to-night for New York in the *Obdam*, aren't you?" she said.

"Yes, of course; and I thought it was cruel of you not to be sorry to say good by."

"Well," said Mademoiselle Parchesi, punching little holes in the smooth, wet sand with the end of her red silk parasol, "as long as I'm going in the *Obdam*, too, perhaps this affair is only an Episode. But, considering that I've met a man who has told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth for three whole days, I think it ought to be regarded as an Event."

THE TRANSFORMATION OF
ARLINE BAIRD

BY ADELE MARIE SHAW



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WHEN Constance Baird beheld her youngest cousin she could have wept.

"I expected," she wailed to Alpheus Hewing, Junior, "to be worn to a shred romping with a miniature *me!* Instead, I've got a pattern of propriety to sit in judgment on my every deed and word. You won't know my language, it's so chastened."

"How long will—" began Alpheus, Junior.

"It may be months! O Alphy, what shall I do?"

Alpheus, Junior, cast a mock-sympathetic glance across the Baird sun-dial recently erected in the Baird garden. "Unfold your brief; fire away," he commanded.

"It's no joke." Constance rested her elbows on her side of the dial covering the "*Carpe diem*" of the inscription, and propped her chin on her palms. "It all comes of trying to do a good deed," she groaned. "Never, never, did I attempt a good deed that I didn't regret it to my dying day! Look at that."

Alphy wheeled and looked. On a rustic bench under the largest maple a tiny girl with neatly adjusted skirts sat netting a species of variegated snake that grew from an empty spool. Her lips were primly

compressed and her sandaled feet crossed at a stiff angle.

"The Pattern?" asked Alphy.

Constance nodded. "Cousin Netta's little girl. Mother got up that spool business; she used to do it when she was an infant, and one can't dress and undress the child all the time. At least I can't—Oh I am tired of clothes. They are Arline Baird's one subject."

"Arline is the—"

"Pattern. Her whole name is Arline Baird Gates, and I am never to address her without the *Baird*. She was named for her great aunt and they rub it in that way."

"Has Aunt Arline Baird money?"

"Money? Only a little. But 'she has position.' You ought to hear Netta say it! The hope of that woman's life is that Aunt Arline will live to introduce little Arline."

"Will you be so kind as to untangle this for me, Cousin Constance?" it asked when it was near enough to speak without undue raising of the voice. "I have mixed it up. It is very annoying."

"Most annoying, I am sure," chimed in Alphy with an engaging grin. "I'll bet you don't often mix things up, do you!"

Little Arline Baird looked expectantly from young Heming to her cousin.

"Present me," demanded Alphy.

"Oh, this is Mr. Heming, Arline Baird," said Constance, frowning studiously over the spool. "You might amuse him while I give my entire mind to this work of art."

"It is not a work of art; it is a garter," responded Arline precisely. "Cousin Constance's mother told me," she added to Heming. "She is my second cousin once removed and Cousin Constance is my second cousin twice removed. Shall we walk about?"

"By all means," agreed the young man.

"Perhaps you ought to have said that? I am not sure how to begin the conversation when my mother is not here."

Arline rolled the final *r* in "mother."

"You're from Ohio," said Heming with conviction.

"By, Con; we'll be back anon, or earlier. Put your mind on your work."

"When is anon?" asked Arline. She had lifted her short frill of a skirt as if to preserve it from contact with the well-shaven lawn.

"Any time we choose to make it." Heming glanced back at Constance but she was conscientiously absorbed in the knitted snake.

"It's like a lawn party," went on the little Arline with great satisfaction. "When I am older I am to have pretty dresses for lawn parties. My mother has a gray voile that spills all around behind her when she walks. I shall have one like that. But I am not sure it will be becoming. I am so colorless! My mother wishes I were not so colorless. What would you have for a lawn party if you were colorless?"

Heming fixed his eyes wonderingly upon the small figure mincing beside him. "Red, I think. How would red do?" he asked.

"Red was what I said." Arline showed appreciation of his interest by a shade more animation. "But my mother said *no*, red was too pronounced. There

is no question but servants," sighed the infant imitator, "that gives me such trouble as clothes."

Heming whistled. "I think it is about anon," he interjected. "Shall we return to your second cousin twice removed?"

"Ask her what she thinks of me as an eligible *parti*," he instructed Constance as he went away. "Dollars to doughnuts she'll understand."

"Alphy," cried Constance desperately "if you don't bring Chris over to play with Arline I shall go steal him. I simply must have an antidote. My mother says I brought it on myself and I'll have to stick it out alone."

"Cheer up, old lady." Heming beat his cap thoughtfully on the gate post. "I'll stand by the ship."

"It's a pity you have that spot; it's so disfiguring," volunteered Arline Baird. Constance was buttoning the prim person of her charge into one of the prettiest of the dresses. Arline's clothes were all pretty and in good taste. What they needed was a little dirt.

"What is disfiguring?" Constance looked up from the seventh button.

"That brown spot under your eye." Arline indicated the spot. "Could it not be removed? A—a blemish like that is so unpleasant for a woman."

"I don't want it removed. It's my best freckle," said Constance severely. "Now, Arline Baird, I want you to be very nice to Christopher Heming. He is the nephew of that kind young man who took you walking and he is coming to play with you. If he wants to run you must be polite and run with him."

"My mother doesn't like me to play with boys

excepting at dancing school," explained Arline with dignity. "Can't we walk about? My mother doesn't like me to run—especially after I am dressed for the afternoon. It makes me 'blowsy,' Cousin Constance."

"It's all right to look blowsy in Hillcrest." Constance spoke with authority.

"Is it? My mother said she was afraid I should lose all my manners in Hillcrest," mused the thoughtful Arline. "I told her I would try not to," she added earnestly. "I have tried, haven't I, Cousin Constance?"

"You have. They are the identical brand you brought with you." Constance knotted the tie of the Peter Thompson suit with clever fingers, and pitied Christopher.

The visit was not a success. In vain Chris proposed hare-and-hounds, hide-and-seek, pirate hoards under the grape arbor, and yachting in the old oak; Arline would not run, would not dig, would not climb. In vain Constance set forth cakes and ale (milk and toast triangles and cookie men). The guest strove hopelessly with boredom, and Arline, passive and superior, did not strive at all.

"My mother does not allow me to eat cookies," she said loftily as she nibbled the toast in polite bites, and Chris brightening waited no urging to devour the double portion.

"She has a conscience, or else she enjoys the distinction of not doing anything she's expected to," reported Constance to her amused elders. "If I can't get through that child's crust I shall telegraph for her 'mother-r.' Come for a walk, Marmee, I'm about at the limit of nerves!"

Truly Arline was, like the grasshopper in time of plague, an increasing burden. She did not care for stories, though she liked pictures of princesses in fine raiment, the tailoring whereof she criticized in no uncertain terms. She absorbed all the time, the ingenuity, the warmth, the courage, of her self-appointed guardian, and seemed more glassy, more shallow, more commonplace with every word she uttered.

"I want my little daughter to be pleasing," wrote the mother to Constance. "She presides at a little luncheon as well as I and she really dances well. She lacks fire but I think she has a certain distinction of manner—"

"'Distinction' of fiddlestick!" grumbled Constance. "She hasn't a human instinct! She's a parrot, a pop-injay, a peacock, a perfect little fool!" and then, and finally, Constance wept. Into her tears intruded the sound of lamentation. Shrill, vituperative lamentation it was, and it was the voice of Arline Baird.

Mrs. Baird sprang to her feet, and faster than her family had often seen her move, fled in the direction of the sound. With fearful and cowardly shrinking Constance followed.

On the broad lawn behind the house, the lawn of the sun-dial and the flower beds, Arline was running, her thin legs in their white stockings covering the grass and trampling the flowers in swift pursuit, while ahead, always just ahead, bounded the Macy puppy. He was a bull-terrier puppy, and his jaws were firm; in their grasp, helpless and indecorously reversed, dangled Arwilda Wallace, the doll of dolls, and Arwilda's clothes, even her flounced and edged and decorated underclothing, were her *best*! The shriek

of the heart-wrung Arline rose shrill and more shrill: "He will tear her clothes! He will tear her clothes—She's got on her *drap d'été*—you wicked, wicked dog—you will—*tear—her—dress!*" And still the puppy ran and the frenzied mother of Arwilda Wallace ran after.

Then all at once, Bumble, the Boston bull, laid Arwilda at the feet of the pursuer, and wagging all over with delight waited Arline's snatch at the restored treasure. Arline was afraid of dogs but she snatched. Bumble also snatched, and Arwilda's splendor was rent as by a cyclone. Arline flung herself down upon the greenness of the Baird lawn and sobbed bitterly. Stunned by the greatness of the tragedy, Constance and the anxious Mrs. Baird stood petrified upon the veranda steps. But Bumble, understanding that the game was ended by catastrophe, offered first aid to the injured with a ridiculous tongue flicking at the heavy plaits of Arline's hair and at her outflung hand. Unconscious of the watchers on the steps, Arline rolled over and blinked in terror at the contrite Bumble.

"Yap," said he, relieved to behold her face; and sitting up in a wabbling attempt at begging he drooped his paws over his plump chest. Then Arline, hugging the disheveled Arwilda, hysterically laughed.

"Oh, dear, did Bumble do that? Now I must whip him again!" Mrs. Macy unlatched the gate that divided her garden from the Baird grounds and hurried to the tear-stained Arline. Mr. Macy followed.

"You certainly must, Helen; he must be taught to let things alone," said the man with decision, and taking the begging Bumble in his right hand he

smacked him smartly with his left. Bumble cried in plaintive squeals that would have deceived a police-court judge and rolled his brown, honest eyes in piteous entreaty toward his supposed playmate.

"Don't you do that. You stop this minute," screamed the child frantically. "He didn't know Arwilda wasn't a plaything. Stop, you cruel man!" and Arline dropped the doll and seized the released Bumble in a desperate hug of protection. Bumble licked her chin with an active tongue and wriggled and burrowed in joyous abandon in her trembling arms.

The four grown-ups, explaining the theory of dog-training, could not convince. "He didn't know," said Arline. "Oh dear, my dimity is all green grass!"

"I'll change it for you," cried Cousin Constance gleeful and triumphant. "Lend us Bumble a while," she called back to the Macy's. "We'll return him in an hour." And it was Arline who carried Bumble and Constance who bore the doll.

Even at the end of the hour the separation of Arline from the destroyer of the *drap d'été* was with difficulty accomplished. Three times in that hour Arline had yielded to his imperious pleadings for a race and come back panting vigorously to rest on the rustic bench, while Bumble seated in sober imitation of a grown and responsible dog rolled the brown eyes expectantly and awaited her recovery.

"Dogs don't get blowsy, do they," commented Arline.

"It's good for them to run, and so it is for little girls—when they are in the country," answered Constance. "It makes them have a—a good complexion."

"Bumble doesn't care about his complexion," said

Arline, and smiled a little smile. "I think I shall put on Arwilda's oldest dress because she might as well run about now she is 'in the country.' Don't you think so, Cousin Constance?" inquired the friend of Bumble.

"I do," replied Constance with fervor, "and I'd put on a frolic frock to keep her from getting all dust and dirt."

"What is a frolic frock?"

"A kind of outside thing that lets you do anything you like because it is meant to be soiled."

"Why can't I have one?" asked Arline.

"You can; to-day. They keep them at the fancy store," promised the twice-removed. "Come get your hat and we'll go for it this minute."

"I should like to show Bumble to Chris if Mrs. Macy would let me," whispered Arline as they passed the Heming homestead on their return from the purchase of the frolic frock, and not only Chris but three of his cronies were added to the convoy of the once care-free Constance.

"Burning house is a good game," projected Phil Pennell.

"I can play prisoners' base to-day; I have a frolic frock," adventured Arline eagerly.

"Have you got a doll?" inquired Tip, whose legal title was Margaret de Peyster Durfee. "'Cause why they're so useful in games. Pansy Beatrice's been scalped fifty-hundred-six-thousand times most, I should think. Her hair pastes on."

Pansy Beatrice, a sorry contrast to the elegant Arwilda, was borne casually under Tip's gingham arm. Cherry stains that corresponded to a spot upon Tip's

otherwise spotless "gamp" diversified still further an already diversified costume.

"My," exclaimed the almost animated Arline, "I wouldn't want Arwilda Wallace scalped. It would hurt her."

"She has a heart and some imagination," meditated her encouraged guardian. "You might play the woods were on fire and you were run—" she began aloud.

"Burning house is lots better," interrupted Chris. "We'll play leap from the burning house—Arthur can leap farther than any one. You watch."

"What is leap?" asked Arline. "Would my mother like me to leap?"

"I think so," said Constance, and added to herself, "if she could see the child this minute she would want her to keep it up. She is actually interesting."

On the evening of this day that introduced Bumble, Arline remained upon her knees after she had completed the usual formula of her prayer. Constance waited. "I thank thee, God," added Arline at length, "for making kind Mr. Heming put Bumble through the gate."

"What was that you thanked God for, Arline dear?" asked Constance.

"For Bumble—It was Mr. Heming put him through the gate—I saw—" but the reply was sleepy and incomplete.

For a revolution so drastic as that which befell, Constance was not prepared. Having decided to leap, Arline gave her mind to the planning of leaps as faithfully as she had given it to the guardianship of her manners. Bumble approved; his aspiring bark arose

eager from the Baird paths. As the weeks of Arline's visit lengthened, spots on the lawn took on a frayed and scuffed appearance, and even the trees showed marks of heavy shoes that clambered up the bark!

"She can stump the boys; she's a Jim-dandy," confided Tip to her father as together they watered the roses.

In a horrified moment at the end of the first month of guardianship, Constance, returning from an orgy of calls, discovered her charge hanging from the top of an elastic birch that swung in a slow curve half way to the ground.

"Look out," called the excited Arline, and her cousin, speechless with fright, saw the sandaled feet, dangle in the air above, backed from under, and barely cleared the descending figure of Arline.

"There," pronounced Arline with deep satisfaction, erecting herself from the heap in which she had struck the pebbly drive, "now I'll stump Chris to do that and I'll bet he can't—Oh, I'll bet he can't, 'cause swinging over makes him kind of sick—he said so!"

"Arline—Arline Baird! You might have been killed. Don't you ever do that again, or let anybody else. Suppose it had broken!"

"Oh pooh, it wouldn't," cried the reckless Arline. "I know the feel. And Oh, dear, I did want to stump Chris—you'll tell him I did it, anyway, Cousin Constance?"

The mother of Netta Gates, who was also the grandmother of Arline Baird, got well and Netta came to Hillcrest as fast as trains could bring her. She was hungry for the sight of a prim little girl who knew

how to hold a parasol and could "preside at a small luncheon." She thought for days about the manner of her arrival and decided on a surprise. When the train puffed and grunted and spit its way into the snug station her eyes went seeking in the village street for a possible Constance holding by the hand a tiny figure that took prim little steps and neither hopped nor pranced. Her eyes were so busy in that search that she did not see the horde of aborigines that descended the station hill in a whirl of dust and a storm of noise that drowned the pounding of the engine; but she stood aside mechanically as they swept across the tracks, the leader, well ahead, raising the most blood-curdling whoop of all.

Then the leader stopped; the whoop changed to a yell of rapture. "My mother," screamed the foremost imp and clamped its arms in a powerful throttle upon the neck of the immaculate stranger.

Entire paralysis prevented Netta's instant repudiation of her child, yet in her horror and disappointment there was mingled relief that Arline Baird was at least alive. The remainder of the troop had drawn off respectfully.

"Oh, Mother, Mother," cried Arline "here I am and this is Chris Heming and Phil Pennell and Arthur and Tip Durfee and Marg'ret Pennington and Daisy Hale and we're playing 'saved from the fire,' and we ran 'way down here just by mistake, and, oh, come quick,—Cousin Constance will be awful glad—and you haven't ever seen Bumble or Mrs. Macy nor anybody, and, oh, mother, I wish we could come live in Hillcrest—"

Dazed and heartsore at the undoing of her careful

work, fearing to hurt Arline's feelings, but harboring hot wrath at the Bairds, and above all at Constance, Mrs. Gates mounted the hill, shame in her soul that the wild-haired, breathless girl beside her should be hers. Even her stocking—

"I tore it getting off the roof of the burning house," explained Arline. "It's a winkelhauk. Did you know a three-cornered tear was a winkelhauk?"

"Good-by Jinks," shouted the rescued, fleeing farther in their interrupted game.

"Goo-by, goo-by! So long—Come over this afternoon," shrieked Arline. "They call me Jinks, and Jumps, and lots of things; they like me," went on the flyaway, hopping on one foot upon the steepest part of the hill. "Can you do that, Mother? I can hop all the way from Phil's house to mine. His mother keeps boarders. It's all right to keep boarders in Hillcrest—everybody is nice and they like you better for not 'sitting down to fold your hands.' Cousin Constance said so. Cousin Constance is perfectly lovely—and so is Bumble."

It was impossible to show indignation to a family so hospitable as the Bairds, and a family that has taken care of your child for ten weeks is not without ungraciousness to be reproved for its manner of taking that care. But Mrs. Gates's shocked and worried spirit gave her no peace till with her own hands she had dressed her daughter for the evening meal. Arline was allowed to come to dinner to celebrate her mother's arrival. The dinner yielded Netta Gates extraordinary surprises. Arline was no longer "colorless." Even her eyes, never before greatly remarked for expression, had now a luster. About the child's

speech was a joyous abandon unfamiliar to her own mother! Every one listened with amusement and real affection when Arline spoke! Was Arline happy for the first time in her life?

Illness had brought Mrs. Gates close to some realities "clothes" and "position" do not concern. While Constance (with young Heming and Mrs. Lacy's brother) laughed away the twilight on the porch, Arline's mother paced the gravel with her hostess, answering vaguely because her eyes, filled with the real mother look, would stray to the pergola, where Arline herself raced from pillar to pillar, Bumble tumbling at her heels.

THE NEED OF CHANGE

BY JULIAN STREET



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IT was in a little pink inn, sticking tenaciously to a Tyrolese mountainside, that we first met the Denbeighs. They sat facing us at table—an extremely British couple in everything save a disposition to be friendly. On our second day they met us with a pleasant “Good morning,” and that evening, as Janet and I were sipping coffee on the terrace, Mr. Denbeigh offered me his cigar case, saying with rapid crisp inflection a word that sounded like “Smilk?”

I accepted a cigar, and Janet asked Mrs. Denbeigh to show her her crocheting. So we became acquainted.

They were a tall, raw-boned couple, suggesting—as human beings often do suggest other animals—upstanding Irish hunters. Their clothing was invariably black; Mrs. Denbeigh wearing a short serge skirt that hinted at home amputation, and her husband the reversed collar and notched coat that proclaim the clergyman. Temperature and altitude made no difference.

Even on our mountain jaunts their costume was the same. If, in its natural urban environment, the uniform ecclesiastical whispers a scanty purse, among the mountain tops it fairly bellows one. That the Denbeighs were in very modest circumstances we consid-

ered evident, and we liked them the more for the lightness with which they accepted their condition.

But, much as we enjoyed the Tyrol and our new-found friends, Janet and I could not forget that we had never been abroad before and might never come again. Europe is a long way from Auburn City, Ohio. We had only one month left, and a month is none too much time in which to see Venice, Florence, Switzerland, and France—unless one is a tourist. When the day of parting came, our regret was mitigated by a cordial invitation from the Denbeighs to visit them at their home in Easterst, an hour's journey out of London.

As we were to sail from England, we accepted eagerly. Not only did we wish to see our friends again, but we felt that a visit to a simple little English household would prove interesting.

On reaching London we wrote to them, announcing our arrival, and early the next morning received a telegraphic invitation to "come to them" for the "week end."

Saturday afternoon found us on the train bound for Easterst.

A guidebook which we had purchased at the station helped us to enjoy the brief journey by reading of the places that we passed. The name of the book is "Picturesque Kent," and its author is the Rev. Adelbert G. deP. Crocks, M.A., F.R.H.S., Rector of Biddlington-on-Blye. We had barely reached Mr. Crocks's description of the charms of Easterst, when the train stopped there, and we alighted. Carrying our two bags, and followed by Janet with a hatbox, I moved toward the station, wondering if I should find

a hack. The only soul in sight was a little footman, very trim in maroon livery and cockaded hat, who came running toward us.

"Mr. and Mrs. Wooley, sir?" he asked, touching his hat with the air of a fiction footman.

I admitted it.

"Thank you, sir This way, if you please, sir." He seized our three pieces of baggage and waddled off rapidly.

Following up the station steps, we came upon a 'bus and a snappy pair of sixteen-hand grays. The coachman touched his hat so nicely that, before I thought what I was doing, I touched mine. I could have kicked myself! Having put us in, slammed the door, and set our bags upon the top, the footman leaped to his seat as we clattered smartly off up the road.

"This *can't* be the Denbeighs' carriage?" speculated Janet.

"Of course not. It undoubtedly belongs to one of Denbeigh's rich parishioners," I suggested. "They're sometimes very good to clergymen in England."

We were whirling along a sweet lane. To the right were rows of thatched cottages, to the left was a high stone wall, above which rose a row of fine old elms. After some distance we turned through a gateway in the wall, passed a stone lodge, the keeper of which saluted, and proceeded along a winding drive bordered with splendid trees. To one side lay a broad reach of turf. In the foreground a flock of sheep grazed; in the distance men were playing cricket.

"It's a park," I said. "Let's look it up in the book."

Janet ran over the pages. "Oh, yes; Easterst Park . . . Easterst Hall:

"There is an air of feudal magnificence and solitary grandeur about the castle which neither the ravages of time nor the spoiling hand of man has been able to destroy. Its walls, richly tinted by the tender hand of nature, thrown into relief by magnificent ivy, its beautiful Elizabethan gardens, its imposing façade, its—"

"The Denbeighs probably thought we'd enjoy driving through the place on our way," I interrupted.

"Yes," Janet agreed. "I wonder if we'll see the castle?"

"Does anybody live in it?" I asked, craning my neck in search of walls richly tinted by the tender hand of nature, but seeing only trees—for we had left the lawn behind, crossed a stone bridge, and were now winding through thick woods. During this progress Janet had hardly looked up; she was reading busily.

"There it is!" I exclaimed as we emerged suddenly, from the trees.

Without so much as a glance at the splendid building, she leaned toward me, marking a place with her finger.

"Look!"

"But *you* look!" I exclaimed. "The dickens with the *book!* There's the *castle!*"

"Yes!" cried Janet, still pointing to the print, "and *there's* the name of the *people!*"

Her voice startled me. I looked—

" . . . seat of the eighth and last Earl of Vibart (d. 1884) . . . occupied by his widow until death without issue (1899) . . . title became extinct . . . estates reverted to Lady Vibart's niece, Miss Probyn, . . . married (1901) . . ."

"Go on!" cried Janet, who was watching me eagerly.

". . . married (1901) the Reverend John Arthur Frederick Denbeigh, second son of the Right Honorable Sir Richard Denbeigh, G. C. M. G., M. P., of Denbeigh Court, Stoke-Wetherington, Haversham, Herts."

I had a quick impulse to leap from the carriage and make a run for it—never mind my baggage. But there was Janet—I couldn't leave her to face it out alone.

"Joseph!"

"What?"

"*Did you bring evening clothes?*" Her voice was electric.

"Yes! Did you bring—?"

"My-light-blue-Empire-and—"

The carriage was stopping before the "imposing façade." The footman had already leaped to earth and was in the act of opening the door. I had the sensation of a rat about to be shaken from a wire trap.

The Reverend Mr. Crocks gives nine paragraphs to the principal entrance to Easterst Hall, "a great Gothic arch, crowned by the Vibart wolf dog carved in stone. . . ." I shall not quote him further. Read his book. You will find that a stone bridge—replacing the drawbridge of earlier times—crosses the old moat, now a sunken garden. Great doors have, likewise, superseded the portcullis. One of these doors swung open as we alighted from the carriage, and two retainers made a rush at us. One took our bags, the other bowed us through the portal. I hoped he did not notice that my legs were shaking. Janet said *she* did.

The hall inside was cool and half dark. I got a vague impression of great space; of huge portraits, massive furnishings. Then, just as a fat butler came to meet us, I tripped upon a rug, lost my footing, and fell into his paunch. The impact knocked his wind out. He gasped, coughed, and presently recovered.

"The Rector and Mrs. Denbeigh's compliments, please, and tea will be served in the blue drawing room at five o'clock, sir." Then, turning to a footman: "Tate, you will show Mr. and Mrs. Wooley to their apartments." The proclamation was delivered with a fine solemnity, despite the jar I had contributed. Had we not been in an English country house I should have apologized to the butler, but something told me that no well-bred Englishman would do so. Without a word, we followed Tate. At the head of the stair two maids awaited us. They escorted us along the corridor and to our rooms.

First we came to Janet's sleeping chamber. It was blue and white throughout—blue satin paneled walls, white furniture and woodwork. In size it was enormous; a tennis court could have been laid out in one corner. Passing through our two dressing rooms—cozy chambers, each covering about an acre—we reached my bedroom. If Janet's was large, what, oh what, was mine! Its area was that of a parade ground. A dark green tapestry hung from the ceiling, to the top of a high wainscot of French walnut. The furniture was of the same wood, heavily carved. The bed was an elaborate four-poster, massive and uninviting.

While the servants remained, Janet and I attempted

to wear an air of being barely satisfied with our accommodations. When they departed Janet locked the door. Crossing the room, she stood for a moment gazing into my eyes, her hands at her sides, her face a study in expressions compared with which the Mona Lisa would have looked a primer. Then suddenly we fell into each other's arms and indulged in mild hysterics.

"A castle!" cried Janet. "A castle! Oh, these bedrooms! Mine was made for a French marquise with millions and millions of lovers, and yours is a room for a king to die in, surrounded by weeping courtiers and a regiment or two of cavalry!" She pointed at my bed. "You'll never be able to sleep—never! It looks like a safe-deposit vault!

"Think of walking right into a castle without having your cane and parasol seized and checked by a uniformed attendant!" she went on. "Think of wandering about floors without the narrow strips of canvas on them!"

"For my part," I said, "I rather prefer strips of canvas on the floors—they save one from tripping." I was quite serious, but Janet laughed at this until the tears ran down her cheeks.

"We had better be unpacking," I suggested, opening my bag.

"Yes," said Janet, moving toward her room, "and I feel like unwinding a thread as I go, so that I can find my way back again."

My bag was almost empty when there was a rapping at the hall door. Outside was a man servant, with a long, equine face, solemn as the grave, and short cropped hair, sprinkled with gray. He stood as

though expecting to come in. "I am to valet you, sir." He pronounced it val'-et, not val-ay'.

"Do you wish to—ah—do it now?"

"May I unpack you, sir?"

Ah! So he wished to unpack me. I was unpacked already, but I knew, at once, it wouldn't do to let him find me out.

"You might come back in a few minutes," I said, glibly.

"Thank you, sir. Very good, sir." He closed the door. I locked it. There was something austere about him that I didn't like. I was glad he hadn't caught me napping.

I repacked hurriedly, and had just locked my bag when he knocked again. This time I let him enter.

Remembering the fragment of some story in which the hero "tossed his keys lightly to the valet," I wished to toss this valet mine, but something in his solemn face forbade it. I compromised by handing him the keys with a careless gesture. But it was too careless. The keys fell to the floor. We both stopped to pick them up and bumped our heads together.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said. But I knew *he* knew I should have left the picking up to him. It was stupid of me. I felt angry; angry with myself, angry with the valet, angry with the Denbeighs for letting us believe them simple people like ourselves. What right had they to dress the way they did? It was deceitful in them. And Denbeigh a minister!

While the valet attacked my bag, I strolled about the room whistling and acting as though I did not notice him. But I watched him from the corners of

my eyes, for I was anxious to profit by the chance to see a valet in the act of valeting.

He took out my dress suit, smoothed it, put it on a hanger, and took it to the closet. As he opened the door, a sudden horror gripped me. There, hanging limp upon a hook, was my own bath robe! He took it down. Despite my consternation, my brain worked rapidly. If I said it was not mine, he would take it. If I said it was, he would see that I had soiled my lily hands with the menial labor of unpacking and—worst yet—packing up again. I decided on the former course.

“There’s a bath gown here, sir.”

I looked at it and shook my head indifferently. “Some one must have left it.”

“I failed to find your bath gown in your bag, sir,” he remarked.

“H-m!” I said. “That’s odd—very odd!”

He examined the robe.

“This is not Lord Wolfendale’s bath gown, sir,” he declared. “That I know. His lordship occupied these quarters last week, sir. I recall that his lordship’s bath gown was brocaded.”

“He probably had two,” I suggested, looking out of the window.

“This bath gown has the name of an American maker in it, sir,” he continued with polite tenacity. “There has been no other American gentleman in Easterst Hall since I’ve been here, sir.” It may have been my conscience, but I distinctly fancied that his tone implied: “The old place is going to the dogs.”

“Let’s see it.” I gave up.

He handed me the robe. I turned it over, thoughtfully.

"Well, by Jove!" I exclaimed. "It *is* mine, after all. It's an old one I'd forgotten. Well, well! How in the world do you suppose it got there?"

Though this was intended merely as an ejaculation, the valet chose to take it as a question.

"Really, sir, I can't say, sir." His tone seemed to add: "I think I could tell if I wished to!"

In a last effort to pass the matter off I mumbled something—I don't know just what—about "Mrs. Wooley" and "neuralgia." I meant to end the matter, then and there, by leaving everything in vagueness. The valet, however, had a disconcerting way of attaching undue importance to every word I uttered, by standing at attention when I spoke. This made my final hesitating soliloquy sound positively idiotic. After waiting to make sure that my maunderings had ceased, he said: "Yes, sir. Thank you, sir," and, picking up my shoes, moved toward the door.

"What time shall I return, sir?"

I wondered what he meant. He talked of coming before he'd even gone.

"What time should *you* say?" I ventured, as a feeler.

"Four, sir?"

"Yes, four—yes, that's a good idea; four. Of course. Four will do very nicely."

"Very good, sir. Thank you, sir. Four."

"Four; yes."

He went out and closed the four—the door, I mean. I locked it. One soon acquires the habit of locking doors on valets. I was extremely nervous. By way of

working off my agitation I danced a little, singing in a low voice:

“The door at four;
At four the door.”

In the midst of this performance Janet entered. She was alarmed at first, but I explained. She had been maided—so to speak—while I was being valeted, but had not found the service trying. Women never do. They take to ladies’ maids more readily than men do—I mean more readily than men take to *valets*. No able-bodied, self-respecting man can get used to a valet in a single generation. There must be a hereditary taint. But despite the inconvenience, it is the duty of the self-made millionaire to have a valet, consoling himself, meantime, with the thought that by doing so he is building up a family—leaving his sons and grandsons not alone mere money but the nucleus of that taste for laziness and luxury which is recognized as the hall-mark of caste. The son will like a valet; the grandson will positively need one. His nurse will give him over to his governess, his governess to his tutor, his tutor to his valet, who will remain in charge until succeeded by a keeper. You see I’m bitter on the subject. *Why* was my valet coming back at four? And was it four P.M. or four A.M. I asked Janet.

“You mean what four and what for?” she asked.

“Yes, dear. I’ll be awfully obliged for any help you can give me.”

“He’s coming back at four this afternoon to dress you for tea,” replied my oracle. Having been to an expensive finishing school in the East, Janet understands these things.

“How will he do it? Where do I stop and where

does he begin? Am I to lie upon the bed and let him tuck me into my things, or can I help a little by raising an arm or a leg?"

"I don't know, exactly," she replied. "We didn't learn about valets at Miss Spink's. Think of stories and plays. Didn't the valet in 'The Earl of Pawtucket' tie his master's necktie, and turn up his trousers, and—?"

"But I don't want my trousers turned up! If he tries to turn them up, I'll kick him!"

"Well, I have to dress," she said, indifferently, and left me to my fate.

Feeling that it would be awkward to have the valet wash me, I repaired at once to the dressing-room, and went through my ablutions. For that, at least, he'd be too late. I was clean, dry, and partially arrayed when at four o'clock, precisely, I heard his knock.

Donning the disputed bath robe, I let him in. He bore my shoes and a tall pitcher of hot water. I had understood that the English never use hot water; perhaps he had understood that Americans never use cold.

"I brought your hot water, sir," he said.

"Thanks, I don't use it," I lied, wishing to show him that, although an alien, I was not unlike the British.

"Thank you, sir. Very good, sir," he returned, seizing the shirt which I had cast aside. After removing the buttons, he placed them in a fresh garment, extracted from the pitifully small supply my bureau drawer contained. Meantime I strolled about humming and scrutinizing him cautiously. He brushed the suit I had been wearing, and laid it, ready, on a

chair. This told me that I was not to wear my frock coat down to tea.

"Will you dress, sir?" he asked, taking up the shirt and coming at me.

I didn't move, merely replying: "Oh, yes."

He advanced and, stepping back of me, took hold of the collar of the bath robe. I stood limp and let him slip the garment off. He then raised the shirt and passed it over my head. At this point I helped him by lifting my arms and fumbling for the sleeves. The shirt on, we buttoned it together. I had not meant to help him with the buttons, but having raised my own arms, I fell into the swing of habit. Our hands bumped and interfered most awkwardly.

"Too many cooks spoil the broth," I said, wishing to pass the matter off in jest.

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir." He thanked me for everything—and nothing. It was maddening.

Selecting a fresh collar, he attached it to the button at the back, and again we struggled jointly at fastening the front. Having begun, I did not like to drop my hands as though acknowledging my error.

Now came the crucial test. Going to the chair, he took up my trousers and came toward me. As he approached, I eyed him as one might eye a hungry tiger. Was I to sit down and be pushed into the pantaloons? Was I to jump and alight in them as he held them open to receive me?

He handed me the garments by the top and, stooping, held the legs just off the floor. Ah! That was it! I slipped in handily; as my feet came through, he dropped the ends. This accomplished, he passed

the suspenders over my shoulders and made them fast. I was congratulating myself on this success when: "Which scarf, sir?" he inquired.

I selected one. He passed it through the loop upon my shirt. I waited, but he did not make a move to tie it. The valet in "The Earl of Pawtucket" tied his master's scarf—that shows how much faith may be put in plays and stories; they aren't like real life at all! Going to the mirror, I made the knot. Meanwhile the man stood by in frozen silence, holding my waistcoat ready. This gave me a disagreeable sense of being hurried; I tied the scarf abominably. Though I wished to do it over, I could not bring myself to keep him waiting longer. Limply I let him put me into my coat and waistcoat.

I was now dressed, so far as I could see. Why was he going to the closet? He reappeared with my dress suit across his arm.

"I don't find your pumps, sir. I wish to polish them for this evening, sir."

I don't wear pumps except to dance in, but I couldn't say so. Trying to look surprised, I exclaimed: "Not there?"

"Strange—very strange," I murmured in a thoughtful tone, wondering if Bluebeard's closet caused him as much trouble as mine made me. "I must have forgotten them. I guess I'll have to wear my patent leather shoes."

"I don't think there's a pair of patent shoes either, sir."

I had said "guess," he said "think"; I had said "patent," he said "paytent," and added "eyther" for good measure. While I was brooding over this, he

returned to the closet ("clothespress") and presently emerged with the shoes I had referred to.

"Here's a pair of paytent *boots*, sir." He held them up.

"They're the ones I meant," I explained. "You call them boots in England, don't you? In America we call them shoes."

"But these are boots, sir." He held them up in proof. Something in his tone seemed to add: "Call them what you like in America, but what they really *are* is boots—*boots!*" Though he had spoken in his usual impassive voice, I had a strange sense of having been shouted down. The American eagle in me gave a cluck of protest.

"I understand perfectly," I said, "that over here you call them boots—it had merely slipped my memory. But in America we call the things that come way up here—to the knees, you know, or higher—boots." I felt my voice growing shrill and tremulous.

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. *Top* boots. But I don't think your top boots are here either, sir."

"No, no!" I cried hysterically. "I didn't bring top boots! I didn't mean that! I was only explaining that *we* just say plain *boots!*"

He was silent; for a moment I fancied that he had grasped my thought. Then: "Very good, sir. Thank you, sir. You'll dress at seven, sir?"

I gave up. "Yes, at seven," I repeated, as one consenting to a tryst.

"Thank you, sir," and he left the room carrying with him my dress suit, my *boots*, and the major portion of my self-respect.

"Boots are boots!" said Janet, later. "There's England in a nutshell."

Together Janet and I descended the broad hall stair, and were guided by a footman down a long corridor, at the end of which was situated the blue drawing-room. It was with little pleasure that I now anticipated meeting our friends the Denbeighs. Having been obliged to readjust, entirely, my impression of their "class," I found myself questioning my first judgment of them generally. Had they really been warm and genial? I was not sure. I felt that I should appear strained before them. Janet would not, thank heaven! Janet is always at her ease. The one bright spot on my horizon was her graceful figure there beside me, in a cream lace gown. Janet is tall and lithe—a trifle taller (and more lithe, perhaps) than I am. I can't describe her better than by saying that she is the acknowledged belle of Auburn City, and looks like an illustration from a magazine. At least I had no fears for *her*, as we entered the blue drawing-room.

My speculations on our host and hostess were ended when I saw them. It was as though they had not changed their clothes since we last met, but had, rather, worn them hard. Denbeigh was delightfully baggy, and Mrs. Denbeigh was a cordial, black-clad ironing board. They seemed to leave the trimness to the servants, I thought, as I watched a footman serving tea. During the light repast we revived memories of the funny people of the Tyrolese inn. Later we strolled about the gardens near the house. By the time we parted, to dress for dinner, I was beginning

to feel quite at home in Easterst Hall—castle though it was. But my happiness was short-lived. The valet was already in my room. He had my dress shirt in his hands—and presently had me.

Why rehearse again the trials of being dressed? It is enough to say that they were many, and that when Janet knocked, to ask if I was ready to go down to dinner, I informed her that I was. This was true so far as mere clothing was concerned; for the rest, I was hot, nervous, enraged, and helpless.

I was startled, on entering the drawing-room, to find it filled with people. Near the door, Denbeigh was talking with a plump old lady in a white lace cap and a black silk evening gown, décolleté, which set off, rather startlingly, a mass of handsome jewels, a pair of short thick arms, and, in lieu of a neck, a bust.

I was vaguely conscious of being led about the room in Janet's train (and once *upon* it) amid a silence unbroken save for the squeaking of my boots and a battery of names—large alarming names. The names bowed and smiled and said things, and I bowed and smiled, but didn't speak. Even the slight comfort of repeating the names was forbidden by the names themselves. "My cousin, General the Honorable Sir Penge Cricklewood"—it struck my senses like a sand bag. I should have liked to call him something, but didn't know which part of it to choose. One after another the names were hurled at me—Lady Swaffield, Lady Cricklewood (a pearl-draped Juno)—Lord Beaufoy (called "Bowfee," pear-shaped head, blond mustache, and high pink cheekbones)—Mr. and *the Honorable Mrs.* Gerald Poole-Saville (in-

vidious distinction, somewhat counterbalanced by a monocle).

Almost at once, General the Honorable Sir Penge Cricklewood presented his arm to Janet, saying that he believed he was to have the honor of going out to dinner with her. At the same moment Denbeigh came over to me and said: "Will you take out Lady Cricklewood?"

Searching out the blonde Juno, I offered her my arm, saying, as I had heard her husband say to Janet: "I believe I am to have the honor," etc.

Momentarily she seemed doubtful; then took my arm without a word. It was not until we had fallen in line that I discovered the reason for her hesitation. I had presented her my left arm. It was a natural error—for I am ambidextrous—but none the less embarrassing. As the ranks began to move toward the dining-room, a happy inspiration came. Giving a humorous little leap over the lady's trailing gown, I made the old railroad joke about "changing to the other side of the train." At first she did not see the point, but after I explained it she thought it amusing and original.

Dinner went fairly well. Lady Cricklewood told me some humorous Scotch stories, the points of which I did not catch, owing partially to the difficulties of the dialect, and partially to inattention, for I felt it necessary to listen to the general table talk in the hope of finding out the proper methods of addressing titles.

In this I was disappointed. They seemed to call the Honorable Mrs. Gerald Poole-Saville "Belle"; Lady Swaffield was "Aunt" to the Denbeighs, while General the Honorable Sir Penge Cricklewood was "Cricky."

The four footmen who served said "Your Lordship" to Lord Beaufoy and "Your Ladyship" to Lady Cricklewood and Lady Swaffield, and in a story that was told it developed that Lady Swaffield was otherwise the Countess of Swaffield, and that her husband was the Earl of the same. This was all that I gleaned. It didn't help a bit.

After dinner we withdrew to the music room, where the Honorable Mrs. Gerald Poole-Saville and Lady Cricklewood sang songs in French and German, which everybody seemed to understand. I was glad of the chance to sit down quietly and merely applaud and smile at intervals; gladder still when the butler announced Lady Swaffield's motor at the door, on which the company broke up.

Janet had taken positive delight in it all. I wished to talk the situation over with her, but as her maid was waiting, I felt obliged to leave her at her bedroom door. I was rather shocked to find the maid up at so late an hour. The servants ought to be in bed. I hoped my valet was. The thought of being put to bed by him was horrible. I opened the door, and was overjoyed not to find him. As I removed my collar I heard a soft step in the hall; then, at my door, the familiar, dreaded: "Rap, rap, rap!"

I waited in silence, hoping he would go away.

After a moment he knocked again, this time a little louder. It was a compelling knock that could not be ignored.

"Who is it?"

"Herne, sir," came the familiar voice.

"You needn't trouble about me to-night," I said, unlocking the door and looking at him as kindly as I

could. "I'm sorry you sat up. I can manage very nicely."

"Thank you, sir. Very good, sir. But I have some water for you, sir." He made as if to come in.

I placed my foot against the door. Once inside, he would not leave until he had undressed me, heard my prayers, and tucked me in.

"Just give me the water," I said, reaching through the narrow opening.

He placed the carafe in my hand reluctantly, I thought, and with a "Good night, sir," closed the door.

Donning the bath robe of my shame, I made the lengthy pilgrimage to Janet's room, intent on talking matters over, only to find her fast asleep. I returned to my kingly suite in gloom. After some silent moments devoted to moody contemplation of the appalling bed I was to occupy, I shut off the electric light and clambered in. It was comfortable—more so than my own reflections.

My dreams were not agreeable. I ran, climbed, jumped, pursued by countless body servants who wished to put me through an exaggerated toilet. Like the familiar figure in the moving pictures, I fled on through woods, across rivers, up hills and down, through great houses where I rushed from room to room, slamming the doors behind me. It was in my own vast chamber that they cornered me at last. I piled the furniture against the door. Outside they yelped and pounded. The door began to give—give. As I rushed for the closet, they burst in upon me. They seized me and—I awoke.

The shriek of terror which I uttered, as they caught

me, was ringing in my ears. I did not open my eyes, but lay there, shivering and thankful. After all, it had been only a nightmare.

This comforting reflection was broken, suddenly, by a sound of stealthy footsteps in my room. A flash of the dream-horror shot through me. I opened my eyes.

By the dresser, motionless, his back turned toward me, stood the living figure of the tyrant of my dreams. If he had heard the cry I gave at the termination of the nightmare, he believed that I still slept. He was gazing at something, something soft, which he held aloft derisively in his two hands. I recognized the something instantly. It was my underwear—the nether part of a single suit which I had bought in Paris—pink, with red stripes running round and round. Alas! where it had once seemed merely giddy, in the valet's hands it achieved an appearance positively shocking—vulgar, ribald, indecent.

Putting the garment down, the man fumbled the contents of the open drawer before him. Then, with a cynical shake of the head, he drew forth a plain Balbriggan undershirt and, placing it beside the other garment, surveyed the ghastly combination.

The horrid truth now burst upon me. The whole pink suit would have been bad enough, but this was worse: I had brought only a half portion of it! The uncanny mixture I had to wear! The man was gloating over it! He would stand by in grim, insulting silence and make me put it on!

Contemplation of this fresh catastrophe plunged me into panic more acute than I had suffered in my dreams. Closing my eyes in simulated sleep, I strove

to rally the scattered forces of my intellect. Breath came heavily; I wished to gasp, but feared to draw my servitor's attention. Peeping through my lashes, I saw him bear the depraved garments to the dressing-room and drape them gracefully across a chair. Emerging, he went toward the hall door. This roused a sudden hope. If he went out, I would spring up and turn the key. Why, oh why, had I failed in that precaution ere retiring? The door had been unlocked all night. No doubt he had come in from time to time, to listen, vampire-like, to the frightened babblings of my dreams.

My back was toward the door, and though eager to see if he had left the room, I did not dare turn over. Listening intently, I heard a rumbling tinny sound; then my tormentor reentered my narrow range of vision, trundling a large tin bathtub. After placing it in the dressing-room, he went again to the hall. Again I waited, praying that the door might close; again he reappeared, this time with two great metal pitchers. As the water splashed into the tub, a new vista of dismay was opened for me. Would he bathe me? Thoughts of resistance galloped through my mind. I would refuse, pointblank, to rise. I would defy him! But even as I planned, I knew I had not courage to oppose his orders; orders which the formal drapery of servile language seemed but to make the more imperative.

Emerging from the dressing-room, he gazed at me for a long moment, during which I ceased to peep between my lashes. I do not think he penetrated my 'possum-like defense, for he now ceased to tread quietly and, walking to the door, knocked several

times. My time was come! I turned over, rubbed my eyes, and looked at him.

"Good morning," I let fall in an apathetic voice. "What sort of a day is it?"

"Good morning, sir. Bright and fine. Your bath is ready, sir."

I must trick him into leaving.

"Is my shaving water here?"

"It is, sir." That hope took flight.

"Please give me a glass of water."

Going to the table, he poured a glass from a fresh carafe.

I drank it very slowly, racking my brains for something which he had not already brought. Then, looking at the ceiling as I handed him the empty glass: "Herne," I said, "I'm very fond of flowers. Could you get me a few for that bowl?"

In the brief pause which followed I knew I had defeated him.

"Very good, sir," and he moved from the room.

The door had hardly closed when I turned the key. Then, slipping out of my pajamas as I went, I made for the dressing-room. My plan was settled. By clothing myself hurriedly and foregoing my bath, I would cheat my persecutor of the chance to see me in the shameful underwear. I snatched the revolting garments from the chair. But no! The clear bath water caught my eye. It would betray me. Time was short, but I must soil the water. Testing the temperature with my foot, I was shocked at the glacial touch. I abominate cold baths, but—ah! a thought. Catching up soap and washcloth, I rinsed them violently in the tub. The result was a gratifying gray.

Ceasing only long enough to slip into my undergarments, I repeated the operation. The water now took on a hue so murky that I began to fear that, by discoloring it too much, I had opened a new field for the valet's speculations on my habits. As a final touch of realism, I spattered water on the mat and towels. This accomplished, I resumed my dressing, conducting it with such despatch that the detested "Rap, rap, rap!" found me safe in shirt and trousers.

I fancied that I detected a fleeting look of disappointment in the equine eyes as they took in the progress I had made. After placing the bowl of roses on the table, Herne assisted me, silently, with the remainder of my toilet. During this, I paused occasionally to make excursions to the bowl of flowers, gazing and smelling at them like an impassioned horticulturist. When, at last, there was absolutely nothing more to do, Herne left the room—reluctantly, I thought.

Sinking into a chair to review the situation, I was now struck by a new thunderbolt of apprehension. I rose quickly and, after taking the usual precaution, hastened to the dresser. My worst fears were confirmed by a brief investigation of its contents. There was not another undergarment there.

Bad as was the last dilemma, this one was infinitely worse. The thought of wearing a suit of underwear a second time while staying in a castle was incongruous, but that of being valeted into my present ill-assorted suit again upon the morrow, was insupportable. Aside from its outrageous coloring, it would lack even the pitiful excuse of freshness. What was to be done? Time would go on in its inexorable flight.

To-morrow's sun must rise, and so must I. There was but one course open. I decided to pursue it.

When Janet entered, ready to go down to breakfast, I was laying plans.

"Good morning, dear."

"Good morning," I replied, rather peevishly, I fear. "You ought to knock before coming in, Janet. You startled me; I thought it was the valet."

"I see you have indigestion again," she remarked, I thought irrelevantly.

"Nothing of the kind!" I had meant to tell her all, but the conversation had not opened propitiously.

"Oh, yes, you have. I know your symptoms. What is it, if it isn't indigestion?"

Should I make a clean breast of it? I hesitated. . . .

"I need a sea voyage, or something," I began.

"You'll have one next week."

"I need it now, though. Right away. This place doesn't agree with me."

"Take this instead," she said, handing me a digestive tablet.

Of course I like to see Janet gay and happy, even in a castle. But her air of levity pricked me a trifle at the moment. Besides, she liked Easterst Hall, and fitted it: it would be unkind to include her in my project. I must act, and act alone.

I took the tablet gloomily.

"Now come down to breakfast."

It proved to be one of those fine old English breakfasts, comprising eggs and bacon, scones, marmalade, and steaming coffee with rich cream. Just the breakfast that I like. But Janet's statement that I had a

bad attack of indigestion wanted bearing out. What I had was tea and toast. I don't like tea and toast.

"I know all about this Sunday morning indigestion," smiled Mrs. Denbeigh from behind the coffee urn. "You may stay home from church, Mr. Wooley. That will cure it."

"Oh, no, indeed," I said. "I *want* to go to church. I don't wish to miss Mr. Denbeigh's sermon."

"What is the sermon to be about?" asked Janet.

"Your husband's namesake, Joseph, and his coat of many colors," he returned.

I felt the warm blood mount to the roots of my hair. Of course mine wasn't a *coat*, but it was certainly the next thing to it.

"Why, Joseph!" cried Janet. "You have a *face* of many colors now. What is it?"

"I'm a little feverish, I think."

At this Mrs. Denbeigh said it was settled that I should not go to church.

"Herne will stay at home and see to you," she added. "He's excellent in a sick room."

"No, no!" I cried. "I wouldn't think of breaking in on the poor fellow's Sunday—not for worlds! I'm not really ill; only indisposed. Perhaps I *had* better stay here, but *he* mustn't—no indeed!" I feared for the moment that I had been too vehement. Would they suspect me, later, when—? I said no more. The question was allowed to drop, on the understanding, I took it, that I should stay and Herne should not.

My scant meal over, I retired, hungry, to my room and cast myself into a chair. Even the prospect of escape was powerless to cheer me. Life looked a gloomy thing at best. I remained in the depths of the

chair until I heard the carriage wheels upon the drive and knew that the rest had gone.

My time for action was at hand. Rising, I hastily collected my belongings and placed them in my bag. Then, after consulting a time table, I scrawled a hasty note to Janet.

"Going to London. Tell them I was sick. Don't worry. Am all right. Will explain later. Expect you on train arriving Victoria Station about noon to-morrow.

"With love,

"JOSEPH.

"P. S.—Be sure to tip all servants well."

Sealing the envelope, I placed it on Janet's dresser. Then I opened the hall door and listened. The house was silent.

Taking up my bag, I tiptoed to the stairs and peered into the hall below. Deserted. I descended stealthily, step by step, and was making for the outer door when another portal opened suddenly, and I found myself face to face with—Herne!

In looking back on this occasion, I am astonished at the calmness I displayed.

"I thought you were in church, Herne."

"No, sir, I—"

"Herne," I interrupted, "I've been taken ill quite suddenly and am going up to London to consult a specialist."

Herne looked alarmed. "Very sorry, sir. Might I ask the nature of the ailment, sir?"

"Appendicitis," I fired at random, suiting the word with what I conceived as a grimace of pain, and a twisting of the body.

"In that case," said Herne, "I'm glad to say, sir, that Sir Frederick Bownes has the next place to Eastherst Park. He's one of our great surgeons, sir. Indeed, he makes a specialty of appendicitis, sir."

This would not do.

"The trouble is," I enlarged, "that I'm not certain it's appendicitis. It may be lungs. In fact I was just thinking that the pains came rather high up, and—" (here I coughed violently)—"you see I cough."

"Yes, sir. But Sir Frederick could—"

"You see," I interrupted, resuming my way toward the main doorway, "it would be very unfortunate if Sir Frederick operated on me for appendicitis, and then, after having cut me all up, discovered that it was my lungs, after all. Wouldn't it?"

"Indeed it would, sir. But Sir Frederick—"

"So that's why I've decided to go to London and see my regular specialist."

"Thank you, sir. Of course you know best, sir, but Sir Frederick—"

"Now I must hurry," I announced.

"I'll send for a cart, and will be ready directly, sir." So saying, he calmly dispossessed me of my bag.

"Oh, don't send for a cart!" I protested. "I'll walk. It will do me good."

"They'd have the cart out in a moment, sir."

"I need the walk," I insisted.

"Very good, sir. As you wish. I'll come along with the bag, sir, after procuring my hat and coat."

"But why? I can take the bag. It's light."

"Of course, sir, I shall accompany you to London."

"No, no!" I cried in alarm. "You mustn't think of it! It won't do at all! I must go alone. I'm perfectly

well, except for occasional slight pain, but I'm very nervous—it makes me nervous to have people near! Besides, it may be something infectious. You'd catch it! No indeed, you mustn't come!"

"It would be as much as my place is worth to let you leave alone and ill, sir," he said determinedly. "Mrs. Denbeigh's express orders were that I should watch after you, sir."

Open resistance was clearly useless. I must resort to cunning.

"I'm sure it's very good in you," I said, submissively. "The fact is, I'm feeling much better now. Perhaps I won't have to go after all. I'll just walk about the rose garden and see how I feel. Then if I decide to go, perhaps you *had* better—"

"Thank you, sir. Very good, sir. In the mean time I'll fetch my hat and coat, so I shall be ready, sir, at all events."

He started for the door, but, with his hand upon the knob, hesitated. Then he turned back and, taking up my bag, remarked:

"I had best keep your bag by me, sir. Most of the other servants are at church, and strangers have a way of prowling about the park, or even entering the hall itself, sir."

I lost no time in gaining the open air. Not a soul was in sight. The drive stretched out before me like an invitation. Along that line lay freedom. Ah, if I had my bag! Yet have not hundreds of men made long and perilous journeys without bags? And after all, what did mine contain? Merely a few articles of toilet, a little clothing, and—I flushed—some underwear that had been worn.

I looked at my watch. A scant twenty minutes lay between me and the train. Herne was by this time in the servants' quarters, at a remote corner of the castle. It was now *or* never!

I started down the drive at a brisk pace, and was soon in the cover of the woods. With the mad feeling of an escaping convict, I quickened my pace to a trot.

On emerging at the other side of the little forest, I slowed to a rapid walk, fearing that I might be noticed. Another glance at my watch sufficed to make me oblivious of appearances. Twelve minutes! Again I trotted on, only stopping to walk as I passed the lodge. The gatekeeper surveyed me critically, but saluted as I hurried by.

In the village street I could not run without becoming too conspicuous. I walked rapidly—very rapidly. Presently I recognized the thatched cottages I had seen as we arrived. How long ago it seemed! What sweet homes they were! What deliciously untrammelled lives their tenants led; the mothers without maids, the children without nurses, the fathers without valets.

I was in sight of the station when the shrill whistle of a locomotive spurred me on. That train must be caught. If not, *I* should be. I fancied Herne making me captive, dragging me back to Easterst Hall, stripping me at once of freedom and fantastic undergarments, putting me to bed, summoning the famous British surgeon and robbing me of my appendix—all before the family returned from church. The vision of death was hardly less repulsive than that of a long convalescence, with Herne forever playing nurse. I ran frantically.

The train and I approached the station simultane-

ously. It had stopped ere I bounded down the steps. As I attained the platform, the carriage doors were slamming shut; the cars began to move.

I heard a shout behind me. A man upon the platform made wild gestures with an umbrella and called to me to stop. I rushed on. The train gathered speed. A red-faced guard, in uniform, snatched at my sleeve, but with maniacal strength I shook him off. The last car was passing. There was an open window and I jumped for it. My hands gripped the sash; my feet found the footboard. I was on, if not in, the train!

Looking through the window, I met the astonished gaze of an old gentleman. He had white side whiskers, and a pleasant face.

"Hello, hello, hello!" he remarked. "You'd best come in out of that!"

He extended his hand, and with its aid I scrambled head first through the window.

He gazed at the receding station, then:

"Hello, hello, hello!" he said. "Friend of yours?"

I looked back. There, upon the platform, stood Herne. My bag lay at his feet. Even at that distance it was plain that he was a very different Herne from the one I had left at Easterst Hall. His face had lost its stolid, equine expression. It was red and full of wrath. His collar was undone; it stood out jauntily at one side, like a wing. He was pointing after the receding train and saying something—something vehement, I judged, from the faint bellowings that reached me, above the rumble of the cars. He seemed to be addressing the world in general, and the guard who had not stopped me, in particular. Was he telling of my underwear . . . ?

Janet telegraphed that she would come to London on the four o'clock train. She did so, bringing my bag and her own opinions.

As we drove across the city, I tried to make an explanation. It was difficult. I had feared it would be.

"But what on earth possessed you to run away like that?" she scolded.

She did not know that certain invisible red stripes were helping her to grill me.

"I simply *had* to have a change," I said.

A VERY DULL AFFAIR

BY ANTHONY HOPE



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“**T**O hear you talk,” remarked Mrs. Hilary Musgrave—and, if any one is surprised to find me at her house, I can only say that Hilary, when he asked me to take pot-luck, was quite ignorant of any ground of difference between his wife and myself, and that Mrs. Hilary could not very well eject me on my arrival in evening dress at ten minutes to eight—“to hear you talk one would think that there was no such thing as real love.”

She paused. I smiled.

“Now,” she continued, turning a fine but scornful eye upon me, “I have never cared for any man in the world except my husband.”

I smiled again. Poor Hilary looked very uncomfortable. With an apologetic air he began to stammer something about parish councils. I was not to be diverted by any such maneuver. It was impossible that he could really wish to talk on that subject.

“Would a person who had never eaten anything but beef make a boast of it?” I asked.

Hilary grinned covertly. Mrs. Hilary pulled the lamp nearer, and took up her embroidery.

“Do you always work the same pattern?” said I.

Hilary kicked me gently. Mrs. Hilary made no direct reply, but presently she began to talk.

"I was just about Phyllis's age—(by the way, little Miss Phyllis was there)—when I first saw Hilary. You remember, Hilary? At Bournemouth?"

"Oh—er—was it Bournemouth?" said Hilary, with much carelessness.

"I was on the pier," pursued Mrs. Hilary. "I had a red frock on, I remember, and one of those big hats they wore that year. Hilary wore—"

"Blue serge," I interpolated, encouragingly.

"Yes, blue serge," said she, fondly. "He had been yachting and he was beautifully burned. I was horribly burned—wasn't I, Hilary?"

Hilary began to pat the dog.

"Then we got to know each other."

"Stop a minute," said I. "How did that happen?"

Mrs. Hilary blushed.

"Well, we were both always on the pier," she explained. "And—and somehow Hilary got to know father, and—and father introduced him to me."

"I'm glad it was no worse," said I. I was considering Miss Phyllis, who sat listening, open-eyed.

"And then, you know, father wasn't always there; and once or twice we met on the cliff. Do you remember that morning, Hilary?"

"What morning?" asked Hilary, patting the dog with immense assiduity.

"Why, the morning I had my white serge on. I'd been bathing, and my hair was down to dry, and you said I looked like a mermaid."

"Do mermaids wear white serge?" I asked; but nobody took the least notice of me—quite properly.

"And you told me such a lot about yourself; and then we found we were late for lunch."

"Yes," said Hilary, suddenly forgetting the dog, "and your mother gave me an awful glance."

"Yes, and then you told me that you were very poor, but that you couldn't help it; and you said you supposed I couldn't possibly—"

"Well, I didn't think—!"

"And I said you were a silly old thing; and then—" Mrs. Hilary stopped abruptly.

"How lovely!" remarked little Miss Phyllis in a wistful voice.

"And do you remember," pursued Mrs. Hilary, laying down her embroidery and clasping her hands on her knees, "the morning you went to see father?"

"What a row there was!" said Hilary.

"And what an awful week it was after that! I was never so miserable in all my life. I cried till my eyes were quite red, and then I bathed them for an hour, and then I went to the pier, and you were there—and I mightn't speak to you!"

"I remember," said Hilary, nodding gently.

"And then, Hilary, father sent for me and told me it was no use; and I said I'd never marry any one else. And father said, 'There, there, don't cry. We'll see what mother says.'"

"Your mother was a brick," said Hilary, poking the fire.

"And that night—they never told me anything about it, and I didn't even change my frock, but came down, looking horrible, just as I was, in an old black rag— Now, Hilary, don't say it was pretty!"

Hilary, unconvinced, shook his head.

"And when I walked into the drawing-room there was nobody there but just you; and we neither of us said anything for ever so long. And then father and mother came in and—do you remember after dinner, Hilary?"

"I remember," said Hilary.

There was a long pause. Mrs. Hilary was looking into the fire; little Miss Phyllis's eyes were fixed, in rapt gaze, on the ceiling; Hilary was looking at his wife—I, thinking it safest, was regarding my own boots.

At last Miss Phyllis broke the silence.

"How perfectly lovely!" she said.

"Yes," said Mrs. Hilary. "And we were married three months afterward."

"Tenth of June," said Hilary, reflectively.

"And we had the most charming little rooms in the world? Do you remember those first rooms, dear? So tiny!"

"Not bad little rooms," said Hilary.

"How awfully lovely!" cried little Miss Phyllis.

I felt that it was time to interfere.

"And is that all?" I asked.

"All? How do you mean?" said Mrs. Hilary, with a slight start.

"Well, I mean, did nothing else happen? Weren't there any complications? Weren't there any more troubles, or any more opposition, or any misunderstandings, or anything?"

"No," said Mrs. Hilary.

"You never quarreled, or broke it off?"

"No."

"Nobody came between you?"

"No. It all went just perfectly. Why, of course it did."

"Hilary's people made themselves nasty, perhaps?" I suggested, with a ray of hope.

"They fell in love with her on the spot," said Hilary.

Then I rose and stood with my back to the fire.

"I do not know," I observed, "what Miss Phyllis thinks about it—"

"I think it was just perfect, Mr. Carter."

"But for my part, I can only say that I never heard of such a dull affair in all my life."

"*Dull!*" gasped Miss Phyllis.

"*Dull!*" murmured Mrs. Hilary.

"*Dull!*" chuckled Hilary.

"It was," said I, severely, "without a spark of interest from beginning to end. Such things happen by thousands. It's commonplaceness itself. I had some hopes when your father assumed a firm attitude, but—"

"Mother was such a dear," interrupted Mrs. Hilary.

"Just so. She gave away the whole situation. Then I did trust that Hilary would lose his place, or develop an old flame, or do something just a little interesting."

"It was a perfect time," said Mrs. Hilary.

"I wonder why in the world you told me about it," I pursued.

"I don't know why I did," said Mrs. Hilary, dreamily.

"The only possible excuse for an engagement like that," I observed, "is to be found in intense post-nuptial unhappiness."

Hilary rose, and advanced toward his wife.

"Your embroidery's falling on the floor," said he.

"Not a bit of it," said I.

"Yes, it is," he persisted; and he picked it up and gave it to her. Miss Phyllis smiled delightedly. Hilary had squeezed his wife's hand.

"Then we don't excuse it," said he.

I took out my watch. I was not finding much entertainment.

"Surely it's quite early, old man?" said Hilary.

"It's nearly eleven. We've spent half an hour on the thing," said I, peevishly, holding out my hand to my hostess.

"Oh, are you going? Good night, Mr. Carter."

I turned to Miss Phyllis.

"I hope you won't think all love affairs are like that," I said; but I saw her lips begin to shape into "lovely," and I hastily left the room.

Hilary came to help me on with my coat. He looked extremely apologetic, and very much ashamed of himself.

"Awfully sorry, old chap," said he, "that we bored you with our reminiscences. I know, of course, that they can't be very interesting to other people. Women are so confoundedly romantic."

"Don't try that on with me," said I, much disgusted. "You were just as bad yourself."

He laughed as he leaned against the door.

"She did look ripping in that white frock," he said, "with her hair—"

"Stop," said I, firmly. "She looked just like a lot of other girls."

"I'm hanged if she did!" said Hilary.

Then he glanced at me with a puzzled sort of expression.

"I say, old man, weren't you ever that way yourself?" he asked.

I hailed a hansom cab.

"Because, if you were, you know, you'd understand how a fellow remembers every—"

"Good night," said I. "At least I suppose you're not coming to the club?"

"Well, I think not," said Hilary. "Ta-ta, old fellow. Sorry we bored you. Of course, if a man has never—"

"Never!" I groaned. "A score of times!"

"Well, then, doesn't it—?"

"No," said I. "It's just that that makes stories like yours so infernally—"

"What?" asked Hilary; for I had paused to light a cigarette.

"Uninteresting," said I, getting into my cab.

STRANGE, BUT TRUE

BY ANTHONY HOPE

THE other day my cousin George lunched with me. He is a cheery youth, and a member of the University of Oxford. He refreshes me very much, and I believe that I have the pleasure of affording him some matter for thought. On this occasion, however, he was extremely silent and depressed. I said little, but made an extremely good luncheon. Afterward we proceeded to take a stroll in the park.

"Sam, old boy," said George, suddenly, "I'm the most miserable devil alive."

"I don't know what else you expect at your age," I observed, lighting a cigar. He walked on in silence for a few moments.

"I say, Sam, old boy, when you were young, were you ever—?" He paused, arranged his neckcloth (it was more like a bed-quilt—oh, the fashion, of course, I know that), and blushed a fine crimson.

"Was I ever what, George?" I had the curiosity to ask.

"Oh, well, hard hit, you know—a girl, you know."

"In love, you mean, George? No, I never was."

"Never?"

"No. Are you?"

"Yes. Hang it!" Then he looked at me with a puz-

zled air, and continued: "I say, though, Sam, it's awfully funny you shouldn't have—don't you know what it's like, then?"

"How should I?" I inquired, apologetically. "What is it like, George?"

George took my arm.

"It's just Hades," he informed me, confidentially.

"Then," I remarked, "I have no reason to regret—"

"Still, you know," interrupted George, "it's not half bad."

"That appears to me to be a paradox," I observed.

"It's precious hard to explain it to you if you've never felt it," said George, in rather an injured tone. "But what I say is quite true."

"I shouldn't think of contradicting you, my dear fellow," I hastened to say.

"Let's sit down," said he, "and watch the people driving. We may see somebody—somebody we know, you know, Sam."

"So we may," said I, and we sat down.

"A fellow," pursued George, with knit brows, "is all turned upside down, don't you know?"

"How very peculiar!" I exclaimed.

"One moment he's the happiest dog in the world, and the next—well, the next, it's the deuce."

"But," I objected, "not surely without good reason for such a change?"

"Reason? Bosh! The least thing does it."

I flicked the ash from my cigar.

"It may," I remarked, "affect you in this extraordinary way, but surely it is not so with most people?"

"Perhaps not," George conceded. "Most people are cold-blooded asses."

"Very likely the explanation lies in that fact," said I.

"I didn't mean you, old chap," said George, with a penitence which showed that he had meant me.

"Oh, all right, all right," said I.

"But when a man's really far gone there's nothing else in the world but it."

"That seems to me not to be a healthy condition," said I.

"Healthy? Oh, you old idiot, Sam! Who's talking of health? Now, only last night I met her at a dance, I had five dances with her—talked to her half the evening, in fact. Well, you'd think that would last some time, wouldn't you?"

"I should certainly have supposed so," I assented.

"So it would with most chaps, I dare say, but with me—confound it, I feel as if I hadn't seen her for six months!"

"But, my dear George, that is surely rather absurd? As you tell me, you spent a long while with the young person—"

"The—young—person!"

"You've not told me her name, you see."

"No, and I sha'n't. I wonder if she'll be at the Musgraves' to-night!"

"You're sure," said I, soothingly, "to meet her somewhere in the course of the next few weeks."

George looked at me. Then he observed with a bitter laugh:

"It's pretty evident *you've* never had it. You're as bad as those chaps who write books."

"Well, but surely they often describe with sufficient warmth and—er—color—"

"Oh, I dare say; but it's all wrong. At least, it's not

what *I* feel. Then look at the girls in books! All *beasts!*"

George spoke with much vehemence; so that I was led to say:

"The lady you are preoccupied with is, I suppose, handsome?"

George turned swiftly round on me.

"Look here, can you hold your tongue, Sam?"

I nodded.

"Then I'm hanged if I won't point her out to you!"

"That's uncommon good of you, George," said I.

"Then you'll see," continued George. "But it's not only her looks, you know, she's the most—"

He stopped. Looking round to see why, I observed that his face was red; he clutched his walking-stick tightly in his left hand; his right hand was trembling, as if it wanted to jump up to his hat. "Here she comes! Look, look!" he whispered.

Directing my eyes toward the lines of carriages which rolled past us, I observed a girl in a victoria; by her side sat a portly lady of middle age. The girl was decidedly like the lady; a description of the lady would not, I imagine, be interesting. The girl blushed slightly and bowed. George and I lifted our hats. The victoria and its occupants were gone. George leaned back with a sigh. After a moment, he said:

"Well, that was her."

There was expectancy in his tone.

"She has an extremely prepossessing appearance," I observed.

"There isn't," said George, "a girl in London to touch her. Sam, old boy, I believe—I believe she likes me a bit."

"I'm sure she must, George," said I; and, indeed, I thought so.

"The governor's infernally unreasonable," said George, fretfully.

"Oh, you've mentioned it to him?"

"I sounded him. Oh, you may be sure he didn't see what I was up to. I put it quite generally. He talked rot about getting on in the world. Who wants to get on?"

"Who, indeed?" said I. "It is only changing what you are for something no better."

"And about waiting till I know my own mind. Isn't it enough to look at her?"

"Ample, in my opinion," said I.

George rose to his feet.

"They've gone to a party; they won't come round again," said he. "We may as well go, mayn't we?"

I was very comfortable; so I said, timidly:

"We might see somebody else we know."

"Oh, somebody else be hanged! Who wants to see 'em?"

"I'm sure I don't," said I, hastily, as I rose from my armchair, which was at once snapped up.

We were about to return to the club, when I observed Lady Mickleham's barouche standing under the trees. I invited George to come and be introduced.

He displayed great indifference.

"She gives a good many parties," said I; "and perhaps—"

"By Jove, yes! I may as well," said George. "Glad you had the sense to think of that, old man."

So I took him up to Dolly and presented him. Dolly

was very gracious; George is an eminently presentable boy. We fell into conversation.

"My cousin, Lady Mickleham," said I, "has been telling me—"

"Oh, shut up, Sam!" said George, not, however, appearing very angry.

"About a subject on which you can assist him more than I can, inasmuch as you are married. He is in love."

Dolly glanced at George.

"Oh, what fun!" said she.

"Fun!" cried George.

"I mean, how awfully interesting," said Dolly, suddenly transforming her expression.

"And he wanted to be introduced to you because you might ask her and him to—"

George became red, and began to stammer an apology.

"Oh, I don't believe him," said Dolly, kindly; "he always makes people uncomfortable if he can. What were you telling him, Mr. George?"

"It's no use telling him anything. He can't understand," said George.

"Is she very—?" asked Dolly, fixing doubtfully grave eyes on my young cousin.

"Sam's seen her," said he, in an excess of shyness.

Dolly turned to me for an opinion, and I gave one:

"She is just," said I, "as charming as he thinks her."

Dolly leaned over to my cousin, and whispered, "Tell me her name." And he whispered something back to Dolly.

"It's awfully kind of you, Lady Mickleham," he said.

"I am a kind old thing," said Dolly, all over dimples. "I can easily get to know them."

"Oh, you really are awfully kind, Lady Mickleham."

Dolly smiled upon him, waved her hand to me, and drove off, crying:

"Do try to make Mr. Carter understand!"

We were left alone. George wore a meditative smile. Presently he roused himself to say:

"She's really a very kind woman. She's so sympathetic. She's not like you. I expect she felt it once herself, you know."

"One can never tell," said I, carelessly. "Perhaps she did—once."

George fell to brooding again. I thought I would try an experiment.

"Not altogether bad-looking, either, is she?" I asked, lighting a cigarette.

George started.

"What? Oh, well, I don't know. I suppose some people might think so."

He paused, and added, with a bashful, knowing smile:

"You can hardly expect *me* to go into raptures about her, can you, old man?"

I turned my head away, and he caught me.

"Oh, you needn't smile in that infernally patronizing way," he cried, angrily.

"Upon my word, George," said I, "I don't know that I need."

THE HEROISM OF MR. PEGLOW

BY E. J. RATH



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EVEN though the door to the inner office was closed, the ears of Simeon Hobby could not escape from the maddening peck-peck-peck that came from beyond it. For at least the tenth time that afternoon he straightened up wearily from his desk, sighed, and shook his head slowly. Then he looked in the direction of Mr. Peglow, who was shifting restlessly on the top of his high stool. There was some satisfaction in knowing that Peglow shared the misery.

Mr. Hobby wondered if ever again the firm of Hobby & Hoople would know the joy of quiet, peaceful concentration, safe from the distracting peck-peck-peck that issued from behind the glass door. For three months now he had been unable to figure an estimate, write a letter, or even read a newspaper except to the accompaniment of Miss Pickett's typewriter.

For sixty years Hobby & Hoople had prospered, in spite of the fact that their correspondence was not typewritten. The original Hobby and the original Hoople were dead these many years, but the firm, which was now none other than Simeon Hobby, solely and exclusively, had never seen any reason to change its sign. It was not much given to change, in fact.

It had the same office, the same furniture, the same habits. It was highly respectable, deservedly prosperous, and enjoyed such a fame for conservatism that some people said it was old-maidish.

The buying of a typewriter and the employment of a young person to manipulate it had been a matter of long and serious consideration by Mr. Hobby and Mr. Peglow. By birth, instinct, and long training, Mr. Peglow was even more conservative than his employer. Together, he and Mr. Hobby had grown up in the business, one to become the firm, the other its chief clerk and bookkeeper. Together, they had pursued an even tenor of commercial placidity. Mr. Peglow was little and thin and bald. Mr. Hobby was comfortably fat. They shared a serenity that nothing had ever disturbed—until Miss Pickett came.

It was Mr. Hobby who was really responsible for her. In a deferentially shy manner Mr. Peglow had let it be known that he considered her advent a dangerous innovation. He might even have carried the day had he been firm, but Mr. Peglow was far too considerate of his employer's desires to dream of anything like open opposition. So, in a moment of weakness, Mr. Hobby had yielded to the insidious advance of that thing called Progress. Henceforth, the letters of Hobby & Hoople would be typewritten.

Miss Pickett was young and brisk and smiling, in sharp relief to the dinginess of the office. Mr. Hobby and Mr. Peglow did not mind that so much—although when two men have passed the fifty-year mark together, without marriage, they are apt to be "set." It was the noise that hurt. That was something to which they had given no consideration. But for three

months now they had been able to give consideration to little else.

They had never spoken to each other about it. Secretly, Mr. Hobby pitied Mr. Peglow, whose annoyance he had furtively watched for some time. Secretly, also, Mr. Peglow had observed the misery of his employer, and his grief had an added poignancy because he realized that, at the crucial moment, he had failed to be sufficiently outspoken against the impending evil. Miss Pickett, who observed nothing of their distress, conscientiously pecked away at the typewriter with what seemed to be a daily increasing ardor.

On this particular afternoon Mr. Hobby watched the trim figure of Miss Pickett depart from the office with a feeling of relief. Then he was seized with sudden resolution.

"Mr. Peglow," he said quietly.

Mr. Peglow slipped from his high stool and approached his employer's desk.

"Sit down, Mr. Peglow," said Mr. Hobby.

Mr. Peglow sat down, with full understanding that something of importance had happened.

"Mr. Peglow," said Mr. Hobby, folding his hands across his waistcoat, "Miss Pickett has now been with us for three months."

"Yes, sir," confirmed Mr. Peglow.

"And we are having our correspondence typewritten.

"Yes, sir."

"Is our business increasing, Mr. Peglow?"

"It is normally good, sir," said Mr. Peglow conservatively.

"What I am getting at," explained Mr. Hobby, "is

whether, as a result of having our correspondence typewritten, we are increasing the volume of our business."

"Hum," said Mr. Peglow reflectively. "I—I think it's about the same, sir."

The house of Hobby & Hoople remained silent for several moments, thinking deeply. At last he observed:

"I have been watching you at odd times, Mr. Peglow, ever since Miss Pickett came."

"Yes, sir."

"I think she annoys you."

"Oh, indeed," protested Mr. Peglow, "I am sure Miss Pickett is quite ladylike."

"Certainly, certainly, Mr. Peglow," said Mr. Hobby hastily. "I did not mean that. Miss Pickett is, indeed, a genteel person. What I mean is, I think the noise of the typewriter is distressing to you."

Mr. Peglow shrugged his shoulders.

"I think it distracts your mind," continued Mr. Hobby.

Mr. Peglow waved his hands in a deprecating way.

"In short, I think you no longer work in comfort, Mr. Peglow."

"Um-m—well—possibly," admitted Mr. Peglow.

"And do you know that I have the same feeling myself?" said Mr. Hobby, eyeing his chief clerk.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Peglow promptly.

Mr. Hobby looked surprised. He did not know that Mr. Peglow had been observing him. After another pause he cleared his throat and said very firmly:

"We both owe a certain duty to the house of Hobby & Hoople, Mr. Peglow."

"We do, sir; most assuredly."

"The duty of always doing our best," added Mr. Hobby.

Mr. Peglow confirmed it with a nod.

"On the other hand, Mr. Peglow, the firm"—Mr. Hobby always spoke impersonally of the firm—"owes to us an opportunity to do our best work. It owes us quiet and freedom from interruption, and a fair chance."

"Yes, sir, I think so, sir."

"But we are not getting that opportunity, Mr. Peglow," said his employer, with sudden and significant emphasis.

Mr. Peglow nodded his head mournfully.

"We are being annoyed," continued Mr. Hobby.

A shrug.

"Our nerves are being destroyed," added Mr. Hobby, in further indictment of the firm.

Another shrug from Mr. Peglow.

"Very good, then," said Mr. Hobby. "The duty of the firm is clear. We—I—shall dismiss Miss Pickett."

Mr. Peglow gazed out of the window and felt uncomfortable. Never in his day had the firm of Hobby & Hoople discharged anybody. Lifetimes were spent in its service, rather. The very idea of a discharge was a shock to Mr. Peglow. To be sure, Mr. Hobby had softened the word, but he could not soften the fact.

"The firm owes it to us, Mr. Peglow," said Mr. Hobby judicially. "I shall dismiss Miss Pickett tomorrow. Er—how long do you think it is customary to give notice?"

Mr. Peglow shook his head helplessly, for this was another innovation.

"A week?" asked Mr. Hobby doubtfully.

The chief clerk spread his hands in a gesture of doubt.

"Two weeks?"

Mr. Peglow pursed his lips, but made no gesture.

"Very well; it shall be two weeks," decided Mr. Hobby. "Thank you very much, Mr. Peglow."

It was quite nine o'clock the following morning when Miss Pickett arrived. Mr. Peglow had been at his desk for an hour, and Mr. Hobby was already immersed in the morning's mail. As Mr. Peglow nodded a good morning to Miss Pickett, he felt a vague sense of pity for his employer. Presently he saw the young woman come out of the inner office with her notebook and seat herself beside Mr. Hobby's desk. Then he bent over his books and shut his ears against the world.

After a little while Miss Pickett went back to her office, and the peck-peck-peck of the typewriter again disturbed the serenity of the firm. Mr. Peglow wondered how she had stood the blow. It seemed to have produced no discernible effect; rather, there appeared to be an added note of cheerfulness in the racking sound that came from behind the glass door.

Nor was there any sign the next day, nor the next, nor, in fact, all that week. Each morning Mr. Peglow would greet Miss Pickett gravely, almost sorrowfully, and each morning she would be smiling as gaily as the day before. It was inexplicable.

A second week began and Mr. Peglow found it

necessary to consult his employer on a most unusual matter.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said hesitatingly, "but shall I remove Miss Pickett's name from the pay-roll after this week?"

Mr. Hobby made no answer for a minute. Then he said:

"Sit down, Mr. Peglow."

Mr. Peglow sat down and waited.

"I—er—" began Mr. Hobby, with averted eyes—"I—well, the fact is, Mr. Peglow, I have not yet discharged Miss Pickett."

"Ah!" said Mr. Peglow, in mild astonishment.

"No," continued his employer. "You see, Mr. Peglow, there was a difficulty. I could not discharge her without sufficient cause. That would be unjust, and the firm of Hobby & Hoople can not afford to work injustice to any one."

"Certainly not, sir."

"So I have been looking for a reason."

"I understand," said Mr. Peglow sympathetically.

"Can you think of a reason?" inquired Mr. Hobby.

Mr. Peglow thought for a moment and then shrugged his shoulders.

"We must have a reason, Mr. Peglow."

"Yes, sir; of course. I was just thinking—"

"Yes?" said Mr. Hobby eagerly.

"Well," said Mr. Peglow uneasily and with a sense of guilt, "I was thinking that Miss Pickett is not always very punctual in the morning."

"You have spoken a truth, Mr. Peglow," declared his employer, nodding his head. "Miss Pickett is not punctual. Yet punctuality is one of the funda-

mental laws of business. I am glad you mentioned the matter. I shall dismiss Miss Pickett for not being punctual."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Peglow, returning to his books.

A moment later he heard Mr. Hobby's bell tap gently. Miss Pickett came out of the inner office with her notebook and slipped into her accustomed seat.

"I shall not dictate, thank you, Miss Pickett," said Mr. Hobby.

Miss Pickett lowered her pencil from its poise.

"Miss Pickett," began Mr. Hobby, with an effort.

"Yes, sir?" said Miss Pickett encouragingly.

"Hem," coughed Mr. Hobby, gazing at his desk. "There is something I very much regret to mention. Miss Pickett. It is that—how shall I put it?—that—er—that you are not what I should call quite punctual in the mornings."

Miss Pickett nodded her head in confession.

Mr. Hobby coughed again. "Really, you know," he added, "it is unpleasant to be compelled to speak of these things, but—"

"You are quite right to speak of it, Mr. Hobby," said Miss Pickett.

"Thank you, Miss Pickett," said her employer gratefully. "I felt sure you would agree with me. You see, our hour for beginning business is eight o'clock. It is quite necessary that we should get things under way by that time. And it would not be right to make exceptions in favor of anybody."

"Certainly not," assented Miss Pickett, nodding vigorously.

"Even though you are a young lady," added Mr. Hobby. "It would not be fair to others."

"Of course it wouldn't, Mr. Hobby."

"I hate to say it, you know," continued Mr. Hobby hesitatingly, "but—"

"You were perfectly right to say it, Mr. Hobby," broke in Miss Pickett. "I am glad you did. I shall do better in the future, sir."

"Wha—what?"

"I shall be down promptly at eight hereafter," said Miss Pickett resolutely.

"But I—that is, you see—" stammered Mr. Hobby.

"I can do it very easily, sir," said Miss Pickett, "and I am grateful to you for calling my attention to it."

Mr. Hobby gazed vacantly at a pile of papers on his desk and seemed bereft of speech. He stirred uneasily in his chair.

"Is that all, sir?" asked Miss Pickett, gathering up her notebook.

"You are quite sure you can do it?" asked Mr. Hobby sadly.

"Oh, yes; indeed, sir. It will be no hardship at all."

"Very well, Miss Pickett. That is all just now, thank you."

Miss Pickett retired to the inner office. For many minutes the head of the house of Hobby & Hoople sat immersed in thought. Then the peck-peck-peck of the typewriter aroused him and he sighed wearily.

Three days later Mr. Peglow approached his employer with the self-effacing, deferential manners that always cloaked him. "Shall I make the change in the pay-roll, sir?" he inquired.

"Not yet, Mr. Peglow," said Mr. Hobby in a subdued tone.

The chief clerk did not permit himself to express astonishment.

"You see, Mr. Peglow," explained the firm, "the circumstances are somewhat changed. Miss Pickett has promised to be punctual in the future."

"I see," said Mr. Peglow, with an understanding nod.

"Which removes the cause for dismissal," added Mr. Hobby.

"Yes, sir" said Mr. Peglow ruefully.

At that instant the typewriter in the inner office began a new staccato movement, and Mr. Peglow and Mr. Hobby looked at each other sympathetically.

"Can't you think of another reason?" asked the head of the firm, squirming.

Mr. Peglow appeared to think deeply. The task was most unpleasant, but he realized that it was necessary.

"I might suggest, sir," he said, at length, "that Miss Pickett does not always spell accurately. That is, not habitually," he added hastily.

"Thank you, Mr. Peglow," said his employer. "Now that I come to think of it, I have noticed the same thing. Miss Pickett, indeed, spells quite badly. Our correspondence should never be misspelled."

"No, sir; of course not."

"Therefore, I shall dismiss Miss Pickett for faulty spelling."

Mr. Peglow sighed and returned to his books, while Mr. Hobby, firm in his resolution, immediately sent for Miss Pickett.

"Sit down, if you please, Miss Pickett," he said, waving her to a seat. He took a letter from his desk.

"This letter, Miss Pickett," he began, "is addressed to one of our oldest customers, the firm of Gammidge & Tillson."

Miss Pickett indicated her comprehension with a nod.

"Gammidge & Tillson," repeated Mr. Hobby. "But I find that you have spelled Gammidge without a 'd.' "

"Did I?" asked Miss Pickett, in a tone of surprise. "Why, so I did. But now I think of it, sir, I have always been spelling it that way."

"You have, indeed," said Mr. Hobby, his task lightened by the frank admission.

"I never knew there was a 'd' in it," added Miss Pickett.

"You didn't?" exclaimed Mr. Hobby in amazement.

"You never told me," said Miss Pickett simply.

Mr. Hobby showed traces of embarrassment.

"I—I guess you are right, Miss Pickett," he said, fumbling for another letter. "We will pass that over if you please. It was quite my fault; I should have told you. But here is a letter where the case is quite different. Here, where you make us say 'we would beg to state that we are shipping to you,' etc., you have spelled 'beg' with two 'g's' and you have put only one 'p' in 'shipping.' "

Miss Pickett leaned over and examined the letter.

"So I did," she said apologetically.

"And down here," continued Mr. Hobby, "You have spelled the word 'transmit' with two 't's' and 'quote' as if it were 'quoit,' and you have put one 'l' in respectfully.' "

Miss Pickett again examined the letter with interest.

"I am a bad speller," she admitted. "A dreadful one."

"I fear so, Miss Pickett," said Mr. Hobby in a regretful tone. "Yet it is necessary that our correspondence should be correctly spelled."

"Of course it is," declared Miss Pickett. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll write that letter all over again."

Mr. Hobby looked startled and began hastily:

"But, Miss Pickett, spelling—"

"I know; I know, sir," interrupted Miss Pickett, nodding her head vigorously. "Spelling is very important. I always did have trouble with it. But I've just thought of a scheme."

"Yes?" said Mr. Hobby faintly.

"Couldn't you buy me a dictionary?"

Miss Pickett's eyes were sincere and appealing, and as Mr. Hobby met their friendly gaze he faltered.

"Even a small dictionary would do," added Miss Pickett.

Mr. Hobby turned an uneasy glance in the direction of Mr. Peglow. That faithful little man was bent low over his ledger. The head of the firm stirred nervously in his seat, and then said, in a low voice:

"Certainly, Miss Pickett. You shall have a dictionary to-morrow."

"That will be lovely," said Miss Pickett gratefully, rising and picking up the offending letter. "Did you say there ought to be two 'ls' in 'respectfully'?"

"Yes, two," said Mr. Hobby, turning to his work with a sigh.

The following morning Mr. Peglow unwrapped a

large package at the office. When his employer arrived he hastened to announce:

"A dictionary has been sent to us, sir. Doubtless there is some mistake."

"No, there isn't any mistake," said Mr. Hobby humbly.

"Is it meant for us?" asked Mr. Peglow in surprise.

"It's for Miss Pickett."

Mr. Peglow, mouth open, gazed at his employer for several seconds. Then he shook his head slowly from side to side and went back to his stool.

The pecking noise from the inner office continued to destroy the peace of the firm of Hobby & Hoople. Mr. Hobby and Mr. Peglow endured it in silence, as a sort of penance. For a fortnight they spoke no more of it. Each knew that the other's heart was full, but each possessed such an acute sense of delicacy that he refrained from allusion to an unpleasant topic. Miss Pickett continued to be conscientiously punctual in the mornings, and thumbed the pages of her dictionary so persistently that spelling became a dead issue. There was more typewriting than ever now, for Miss Pickett wrote each letter twice. From the original copy she would carefully compare doubtful words with the bulky volume at her elbow; then she would rewrite each letter in accordance with the accepted standard of orthography. The educational value of the undertaking was great—for Miss Pickett—but it was wrecking the nervous systems of Mr. Hobby and Mr. Peglow.

"Can not you think of any other reason, Mr. Peglow?" asked his employer one day, when his mood had become desperate.

"For what?" asked Mr. Peglow, temporizing weakly.

"For dismissing Miss Pickett."

Now, Mr. Peglow gladly would have been of assistance, but he could think of nothing, so he shook his head to signify that fact.

"But, don't you see," said Mr. Hobby, "that you and I can not stand this much longer? You are going to break down under it. So am I. We shall never become accustomed to it. We are too old to learn. We must think of some other way."

"I wish I could," said Mr. Peglow unhappily.

"But you must," declared Mr. Hobby, with unwonted emphasis.

Mr. Peglow thought long and deeply, and then said:

"Couldn't you just do it on account of the real reason?"

Mr. Hobby brightened.

"Yes, I could, I suppose—and, by Jove, I will! I will do it at once. Miss Pickett! No, no, Mr. Peglow; remain here, if you please."

Mr. Peglow shifted uneasily from one foot to the other as Miss Pickett appeared with her notebook.

"Er—Miss Pickett," said Mr. Hobby.

"Yes, sir?"

"Mr. Peglow and I"—it was cowardly to bring Mr. Peglow into it, but his employer felt the need of moral support—"Mr. Peglow and I think—that is, we have come to the conclusion—that the typewriter is—er—why— By the way, what was it we were saying about the typewriter, Mr. Peglow?"

Mr. Peglow gave his employer a glance of bitter reproach. Then he looked at Miss Pickett.

"I think we were saying, sir," he said slowly, "that the typewriter was in need of a new ribbon."

Mr. Hobby gazed at his clerk in amazement. Mr. Peglow was slightly flushed. Had he been anybody other than himself, his expression might have been interpreted as one of defiance. The head of the firm ventured to look at Miss Pickett. Then he groveled.

"Does it need a new ribbon?" he asked, swallowing hard.

"Why, I hardly think so," said Miss Pickett, puzzled. "I put on a new one yesterday afternoon."

Mr. Hobby bent his head over his desk and began to examine minutely a letter that he had just signed.

"So you did; so you did," he murmured. "Where did you ever get the idea that the typewriter needed a new ribbon, Mr. Peglow?"

"I—I don't know, sir," said Mr. Peglow awkwardly. "Perhaps I was mistaken."

"Yes, you were mistaken," said Mr. Hobby almost severely, still examining the letter. "The ribbon seems quite new. I guess that's all, Miss Pickett, thank you."

Miss Pickett went back to the inner office, Mr. Hobby and Mr. Peglow ventured to look at each other. Not a word was spoken. The chief clerk sighed eloquently and returned to his high stool. The firm shook his head slowly and bent over his desk.

They endured another week of it, during which Mr. Peglow made no further allusions to the pay-roll. What they suffered neither confided to the other,

though each continued his surreptitious and sympathetic observations.

Then, late one day, Mr. Hobby summoned his chief clerk.

"Mr. Peglow," he said, "I shall not be here to-morrow."

Mr. Peglow looked incredulous, for this was another innovation.

"No," continued Mr. Hobby. "And I shall not be here probably for several weeks."

Mr. Peglow stood in mute amazement.

"I am going away, Mr. Peglow," said the firm wearily. "Going away for a rest. My nerves demand it. I can endure it no longer. You will have to look after the business."

Mr. Peglow bowed his head submissively.

"There is one other thing," added Mr. Hobby. "I have been thinking of it for a long time, Mr. Peglow. I am going to make you an offer of partnership."

Mr. Peglow was too overcome for speech. There was an almost painful silence, broken only by the peck-peck-peck from the inner room.

"You have long been a faithful employee, Mr. Peglow," his employer continued at last. "I have reached the point in life where I wish to share the burdens—and the profits—of the business. I can think of none so deserving as you."

The chief clerk was still speechless.

"Therefore," said Mr. Hobby, "I intend to make you my partner—on one condition."

He looked up at Mr. Peglow very gravely, then over his shoulder to see whether the glass door was

closed. After that he leaned forward and whispered hoarsely:

"On condition that you dispense with that—that noise."

Mr. Peglow swallowed hard, his face showing an expression of mingled joy and anguish.

"Mr. Hobby," he began, "I am so deeply grateful to you that I can not find the right words to say. But—"

"Good by, Mr. Peglow," said Mr. Hobby abruptly, rising from his chair, slamming down the lid of his desk, and reaching for his hat. "Good by, sir. I am going at once. I may be gone a couple of weeks—or a month; I don't know. I leave it all in your hands."

He seized Mr. Peglow's unresisting hand, wrung it warmly, and walked briskly out. Mr. Peglow gazed after him stupidly. A partnership! The dream of his life was to become a reality. No longer would he be *with* Hobby & Hoople; he would be *of* them. He drew a deep breath and straightened his little figure manfully. He glanced about the dusty office with the old feeling of tenderness, and an entirely new sensation of proud possession. Then his eye fell on the glass door and his ear caught the sound that came from within. The joy faded out of his countenance and he became a picture of dejection. For a full minute he stood thus, his hands twitching nervously. Then Mr. Peglow did something that no man had ever seen him do before. He doubled up his fist, raised it over his head, and shook it in impotent rage.

The head of the firm of Hobby & Hoople was gone for a full three weeks, during which time he wrote not a single letter to Mr. Peglow, greatly to that gen-

tleman's alarm. Then he appeared one forenoon, as suddenly as he had departed. Mr. Peglow found himself whacked heartily on the shoulder, and whisked about to view a rejuvenated Mr. Hobby, ruddy and smiling and almost boyish.

"And how are you, Mr. Peglow?" said the firm heartily.

"I am well, Mr. Hobby, and I am indeed glad to see you, sir."

"You are looking fine," commented Mr. Hobby. "Has everything gone all right?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I think so."

Mr. Hobby swept a glance around the office and nodded his head, as if in confirmation. The door of the inner office was closed. No sound came from beyond it, although he listened almost fearfully. Then he tiptoed toward it softly, listened again, and finally opened it and entered.

There was nobody there. The typewriter stood pathetically on Miss Pickett's desk. He ran his finger along the top of the frame and found it thick with dust. Another layer of dust coated the dictionary. Mr. Hobby contemplated the scene for a moment and then sighed deeply.

Peglow had done it, after all. Peglow was a braver man than he. There was something unpleasant in the thought. Peglow was his partner now. Why shouldn't Peglow have been brave? He had a motive, an ambition. For the sake of the ambition he had—Mr. Hobby tried not to think about it. Of course, he wanted Peglow for his partner, but he disliked to reflect that his desire had been won in such a way. At any rate, it was his own fault, and he reproached

himself for it. He never should have made such a condition. He had forced Peglow to do it. He had shirked his own duty, and had offered the performance of it as a sort of bribe to another. The old-time silence of the office no longer seemed so joyful as it did in other days. Actually, he seemed to miss that maddening peck-peck-peck.

Mr. Hobby stepped into the outer office again and closed the door behind him softly. Mr. Peglow was laboring over his accounts, his conscience apparently easy. The head of the firm studied his back in silence for half a minute. Then he said almost sharply:

"Mr. Peglow!"

"Yes, sir?" said Mr. Peglow, slipping off his stool.

"I believe you are my partner now, Mr. Peglow."

The little man dropped his eyes modestly.

"By that I mean," said Mr. Hobby, "you have—er—dismissed Miss Pickett?"

Mr. Peglow did not lift his eyes, but made a slight inclination of the head.

"Would you mind telling me, Mr. Peglow, how you accomplished it?"

"Why," said Mr. Peglow, in a low voice, "Miss Pickett left to be married."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Hobby, his face brightening. "So she went in happiness and not in sorrow. I am glad, very glad, sir."

Mr. Peglow himself looked pleased.

"And whom did she marry?" inquired Mr. Hobby, with polite interest in the affairs of his late amanuensis.

"Me," said Mr. Peglow, with a blush.

The head of the firm of Hobby & Hoople stared

open-mouthed at the junior partner. Mr. Peglow's eyes fell again and he shifted his weight to the other foot. There was a long, embarrassed silence. Then Mr. Hobby roused himself and stepped forward impulsively. He seized Mr. Peglow's hand in a viselike grip, shook it violently, and turned to his desk without a word.

Five minutes later he paused midway in the task of opening a pile of letters, and muttered:

"I wonder why in the world I didn't think of that myself."

THREE MODERN FABLES

BY GEORGE ADE



THE FABLE OF THE TWO MANDOLIN PLAYERS AND THE WILLING PERFORMER

BY GEORGE ADE

A VERY attractive Débutante knew two Young Men, who called on her every Thursday Evening and brought their Mandolins along.

They were Conventional Young Men, of the Kind that you see wearing Spring Overcoats in the Clothing Advertisements. One was named Fred, and the other was Eustace.

The Mothers of the Neighborhood often remarked, "What Perfect Manners Fred and Eustace have!" Merely as an aside it may be added that Fred and Eustace were more Popular with the Mothers than they were with the Younger Set, although no one could say a Word against either of them. Only it was rumored in Keen Society that they didn't Belong. The Fact that they went Calling in a Crowd, and took their Mandolins along, may give the Acute Reader some Idea of the Life that Fred and Eustace held out to the Young Women of their Acquaintance.

The Débutante's name was Myrtle. Her Parents were very Watchful, and did not encourage her to receive Callers, except such as were known to be Exem-

plary Young Men. Fred and Eustace were a few of those who escaped the Black List. Myrtle always appeared to be glad to see them, and they regarded her as a Darned Swell Girl.

Fred's Cousin came from St. Paul on a Visit; and one Day, in the Street, he saw Myrtle, and noticed that Fred tipped his Hat, and gave her a Stage Smile.

"Oh, Queen of Sheba!" exclaimed the Cousin from St. Paul, whose name was Gus, as he stood stock still and watched Myrtle's Reversible Plaid disappear around a Corner. "She's a Bird. Do you know her well?"

"I know her Quite Well," replied Fred, coldly. "She is a Charming Girl."

"She is all of that. You're a great Describer. And now what Night are you going to take me around to Call on her?"

Fred very naturally Hemmed and Hawed. It must be remembered that Myrtle was a member of an Excellent Family, and had been schooled in the Proprieties, and it was not to be supposed that she would crave the Society of slangy old Gus, who had an abounding Nerve, and furthermore was as Fresh as the Mountain Air.

He was the Kind of Fellow who would see a Girl twice, and then, upon meeting her the Third Time, he would go up and straighten her Cravat for her, and call her by her First Name.

Put him into a Strange Company—en route to a Picnic—and by the time the Baskets were unpacked he would have a Blonde all to himself, and she would have traded her Fan for his College Pin.

If a Fair-Looker on the Street happened to glance

at him Hard he would run up and seize her by the Hand, and convince her that they had Met. And he always Got Away with it, too.

In a Department Store, while awaiting for the Cash Boy to come back with the Change, he would find out the Girl's Name, her Favorite Flower, and where a Letter would reach her.

Upon entering a Parlor Car at St. Paul he would select a Chair next to the Most Promising One in Sight, and ask her if she cared to have the Shade lowered.

Before the Train cleared the Yards he would have the Porter bringing a Foot-Stool for the Lady.

At Hastings he would be asking her if she wanted Something to Read.

At Red Wing he would be telling her that she resembled Maxine Elliott, and showing her his Watch, left to him by his Grandfather, a Prominent Virginian.

At La Crosse he would be reading the Menu Card to her, and telling her how different it is when you have Some One to join you in a Bite.

At Milwaukee he would go out and buy a Bouquet for her, and when they rode into Chicago they would be looking out of the same Window, and he would be arranging for her Baggage with the Transfer Man. After that they would be Old Friends.

Now, Fred and Eustace had been at School with Gus, and they had seen his Work, and they were not disposed to Introduce him into One of the most Exclusive Homes in the City.

They had known Myrtle for many Years; but they did not dare to Address her by her First Name, and they were Positive that if Gus attempted any of his

usual Tactics with her she would be Offended; and, naturally enough, they would be Blamed for bringing him to the House.

But Gus insisted. He said he had seen Myrtle, and she Suited him from the Ground up, and he proposed to have Friendly Doings with her. At last they told him they would take him if he promised to Behave. Fred warned him that Myrtle would frown down any Attempt to be Familiar on Short Acquaintance, and Eustace said that as long as he had known Myrtle he had never Presumed to be Free and Forward with her. He had simply played the Mandolin. That was as Far Along as he had ever got.

Gus told them not to Worry about him. All he asked was a Start. He said he was a Willing Performer, but as yet he never had been Disqualified for Crowding.

Fred and Eustace took this to mean that he would not Overplay his Attentions, so they escorted him to the House.

As soon as he had been Presented, Gus showed her where to sit on the Sofa, then he placed himself about Six Inches away and began to Buzz, looking her straight in the Eye. He said that when he first saw her he Mistook her for Miss Prentice, who was said to be the Most Beautiful Girl in St. Paul, only, when he came closer, he saw that it couldn't be Miss Prentice, because Miss Prentice didn't have such Lovely Hair. Then he asked her the Month of her Birth and told her Fortune, thereby coming nearer to Holding her Hand within Eight Minutes than Eustace had come in a Lifetime.

"Play something, Boys," he Ordered, just as if he

had paid them Money to come along and make Music for him.

They unlimbered their Mandolins and began to play a Sousa March. He asked Myrtle if she had seen the New Moon. She replied that she had not, so they went Outside.

When Fred and Eustace finished the first Piece, Gus appeared at the open Window, and asked them to play "The Georgia Camp-Meeting," which had always been one of his Favorites.

So they played that, and when they had Concluded there came a Voice from the Outer Darkness, and it was the Voice of Myrtle. She said: "I'll tell you what to Play; play the Intermezzo."

Fred and Eustace exchanged Glances. They began to Perceive that they had been backed into a Siding. With a few Potted Palms in front of them, and two Cards from the Union, they would have been just the same as a Hired Orchestra.

But they played the Intermezzo and felt Peevish. Then they went to the Window and looked out. Gus and Myrtle were sitting in the Hammock, which had quite a Pitch toward the Center. Gus had braced himself by Holding to the back of the Hammock. He did not have his Arm around Myrtle, but he had it Extended in a Line parallel with her Back. What he had done wouldn't Justify a Girl in saying, "Sir!" but it started a Real Scandal with Fred and Eustace. They saw that the only Way to Get Even with her was to go Home without saying "Good Night." So they slipped out the Side Door, shivering with Indignation.

After that, for several Weeks, Gus kept Myrtle so Busy that she had no Time to think of considering

other Candidates. He sent Books to her Mother, and allowed the Old Gentleman to take Chips away from him at Poker.

They were Married in the Autumn, and Father-in-Law took Gus into the Firm, saying that he had needed a good Pusher for a Long Time.

At the Wedding the two Mandolin Players were permitted to act as Ushers.

MORAL: *To get a fair Trial of Speed, use a Pace-Maker.*

THE FABLE OF THE VISITOR WHO GOT A LOT FOR THREE DOLLARS

BY GEORGE ADE

THE Learned Phrenologist sat in his Office surrounded by his Whiskers.

Now and then he put a Forefinger to his Brow and glanced at the Mirror to make sure that he still resembled William Cullen Bryant.

Near him, on a Table, was a Pallid Head made of Plaster-of-Paris and stickily ornamented with small Labels. On the wall was a Chart showing that the Orang-utan does not have Daniel Webster's facial angle.

"Is the Graft played out?" asked the Learned Phrenologist, as he waited. "Is Science up against it or What?"

Then he heard the fall of Heavy Feet and resumed his Imitation.

The Door opened and there came into the Room a tall, rangy Person with a Head in the shape of a Rocky Ford Cantaloup.

Aroused from his Meditation, the Learned Phrenologist looked up at the Stranger as through a Glass, darkly, and pointed to a Red Plush Chair.

The Easy Mark collapsed into the Boarding-House

Chair and the Man with more Whiskers than Darwin ever saw stood behind Him and ran his Fingers over his Head, Tarantula-Wise.

"Well, well!" said the Learned Phrenologist. "Enough Benevolence here to do a family of Eight. Courage? I guess yes! Dewey's got the same kind of a Lump right over the Left Ear. Love of Home and Friends—like the ridge behind a Bunker! Firmness—out of sight! Reverence—well, when it comes to Reverence, you're certainly There with the Goods! Conscientiousness, Hope, and Ideality—the Limit! And as for Metaphysical Penetration—oh, Say, the Metaphysical Penetration, right where you part the Hair—oh, Laura! Say, you've got Charles Eliot Norton whipped to a Custard. I've got my Hand on it now. You can feel it yourself, can't you?"

"I can feel Something," replied the Human Being, with a rapt Smile.

"Wit, Compassion, and Poetic Talent—right here where I've got my Thumb—a Cinch! I think you'll run as high as 98 per cent on all the Intellectual Faculties. In your Case we have a Rare Combination of Executive Ability, or the Power to Command, and those Qualities of Benevolence and Ideality which contribute to the fostering of Permanent Religious Sentiment. I don't know what your present Occupation is, but you ought to be President of a Theological Seminary. Kindly slip me Three Dollars before you Pass Out."

The Tall Man separated himself from Two Days' Pay and then went out on the Street and pushed People off the Sidewalk, He thought so well of Himself.

Thereafter, as before, he drove a Truck, but he was always glad to know that he could have been President of a Theological Seminary.

MORAL: *A good Jolly is worth Whatever you Pay for it.*

THE FABLE OF THE PREACHER WHO FLEW HIS KITE, BUT NOT BECAUSE HE WISHED TO DO SO

BY GEORGE ADE

A CERTAIN Preacher became wise to the Fact that he was not making a Hit with his Congregation. The Parishioners did not seem inclined to seek him out after Services and tell him he was a Pansy. He suspected that they were Rapping him on the Quiet.

The Preacher knew there must be something wrong with his Talk. He had been trying to Expound in a clear and straightforward Manner, omitting Foreign Quotations, setting up for illustration of his Points such Historical Characters as were familiar to his Hearers, putting the stubby Old English words ahead of the Latin, and rather flying low along the Intellectual Plane of the Aggregation that chipped in to pay his Salary.

But the Pew-Holders were not tickled. They could Understand everything he said, and they began to think he was Common.

So he studied the Situation and decided that if he wanted to Win them and make everybody believe he was a Nobby and Boss Minister he would have to

hand out a little Guff. He fixed it up Good and Plenty.

On the following Sunday Morning he got up in the Lookout and read a Text that didn't mean anything, read from either Direction, and then he sized up his Flock with a Dreamy Eye and said: "We can not more adequately voice the Poetry and Mysticism of our Text than in those familiar Lines of the great Icelandic Poet, Ikon Navrojk:

"To hold is not to have—
Under the seared Firmament,
Where Chaos sweeps, and Vast Futurity
Sneers at these puny Aspirations—
There is the full Reprisal."

When the Preacher concluded this Extract from the Well-Known Icelandic Poet he paused and looked downward, breathing heavily through his Nose, like Camille in the Third Act.

A Stout Woman in the Front Row put on her Eye-Glasses and leaned forward so as not to miss Anything. A Venerable Harness Dealer over at the Right nodded his Head solemnly. He seemed to recognize the Quotation. Members of the Congregation glanced at one another as if to say: "This is certainly Hot Stuff!"

The Preacher wiped his Brow and said he had no Doubt that every one within the Sound of his Voice remembered what Quarolius had said, following the same Line of Thought. It was Quarolius who disputed the Contention of the great Persian Theologian Ramtazuk, that the Soul in its reaching out after the Unknowable was guided by the Spiritual Genesis of

Motive rather than by mere Impulse of Mentality. The Preacher didn't know what all This meant, and he didn't care, but you can rest easy that the Pew-Holders were On in a minute. He talked it off in just the Way that Cyrano talks when he gets Roxane so Dizzy that she nearly falls off the Piazza.

The Parishioners bit their Lower Lips and hungered for more First-Class Language. They had paid their Money for Tall Talk and were prepared to solve any and all Styles of Delivery. They held on to the Cushions and seemed to be having a Nice Time.

The Preacher quoted copiously from the Great Poet 'Amebius. He recited 18 lines of Greek and then said: "How true this is!" And not a Parishioner batted an Eye.

It was Amebius whose Immortal Lines he recited in order to prove the Extreme Error of the Position assumed in the Controversy by the Famous Italian, Polenta.

He had them Going, and there wasn't a Thing to it. When he would get tired of faking Philosophy he would quote from a Celebrated Poet of Ecuador or Tasmania or some other Seaport Town. Compared with this Verse, all of which was of the same School as the Icelandic Masterpiece, the most obscure and clouded Passage in Robert Browning was like a Plate-Glass Front in a State Street Candy Store just after the Colored Boy gets through using the Chamois.

After that he became Eloquent, and began to get rid of long Boston Words that hadn't been used before that Season. He grabbed a rhetorical Roman Candle in each Hand and you couldn't see him for the Sparks.

After which he sank his Voice to a Whisper and talked about the Birds and the Flowers. Then, although there was no Cue for him to Weep, he shed a few real Tears. And there wasn't a dry Glove in the church.

After he sat down he could tell by the Scared Look of the People in Front that he had made a Ten-Strike.

Did they give him the Joyous Palm that Day? Sure!

The Stout Lady could not control her Feelings when she told how much the Sermon had helped her. The venerable Harness Dealer said he wished to indorse the Able and Scholarly Criticism of Polenta.

In fact, every one said the Sermon was Superfine and Dandy. The only thing that worried the Congregation was the Fear that if it wished to retain such a Whale it might have to Boost his Salary.

In the Meantime the Preacher waited for some one to come and ask about Polenta, Amebius, Ramtazuk, Quarolius and the great Icelandic Poet, Navrojk. But no one had the Face to step up and confess his Ignorance of these Celebrities. The Pew-Holders didn't even admit among themselves that the Preacher had rung in some New Ones. They stood Pat, and merely said it was an Elegant Sermon.

Perceiving that they would stand for Anything, the Preacher knew what to do after that.

MORAL: *Give the People what they Think they want.*

PLURIBUS JONES AND HOW HE
CAME INTO HIS OWN

BY SEWELL FORD



PLURIBUS JONES AND HOW HE CAME INTO HIS OWN

BY SEWELL FORD

I

LOGICALLY, there should have been nothing in common between Pinkey Barstow and Pluribus Jones. They were as unlike as an apple-dumpling and a soda-cracker. Physically, socially, and mentally they were different, from their various attitudes toward life as a whole to their respective tastes for tobacco. Barstow indulged moderately in cigarettes, Jones was incessantly whittling a black plug to fill his cutty-pipe. Pinkey, to return to the simile, was the apple-dumpling, Pluribus the soda-cracker.

It was through their relations to the Pan-American Construction Company that they were discovered to each other. Mr. Barstow happened to be vice-president of the concern. Not that he was a captain of industry, or anything of the sort. His natural talents fitted him better to be a brigadier of leisure.

At one and thirty, by which time a man is supposed to have given some indication of the sort of thing which may be expected of him, Pinkey Barstow could point to but one instance when he had achieved distinction. During his senior term he had coached an

unpromising crew of 'varsity oarsmen into such shape that they won an unexpected victory, and for five years thereafter he had done nothing more, save live in the manner which his somewhat luxurious tastes dictated.

Incidentally he had been persuaded by an old friend of his father to invest the remainder of his fortune in purchasing a one-third interest in the Pan-American Construction Company, accepting the complimentary office of vice-president under protest. Occasionally after that, chiefly because it seemed rather a humorous thing to do, he would appear at his desk in the company's offices and ask absurd questions as to the concern's complicated interests. One day, however, to the astonishment of all interested, he announced that he had secured some business for the company.

"Met a chap at dinner last night and fixed up a deal," he observed. "I have the papers, all drawn up and clinched with signatures, too. There they are," and he tossed a fat envelope on the directors' table.

An examination of the documents produced consternation and dismay. Mr. Barstow, in his capacity as vice-president, had not only undertaken a contract to furnish the city of Guanica with a complete water works system within five months from date, but had agreed to give forfeit bonds to a scandalous amount binding the company to finish the job at the specified time.

"Great Scott!" gasped the gray-haired, keen-eyed president of the Pan-American Construction Company. "Why didn't you ask us about this thing before you signed it?"

"Never thought of that," responded Pinkey blandly. "Just where is this Guanica, anyway?"

Guanica, he was informed, was the capital of one of those tempestuous little republics bordering the Caribbean, a state in which revolution was the chief industry and from which yellow fever was the principal export.

"The señor said it would be a good thing for us," protested Pinkey. "Isn't the price right?"

"Oh, yes, the price is all right; too good to be true, in fact. It's the five months forfeit clause that's all wrong. Suppose we should slip up and had to pay that? Why, it would wipe us out."

"Then we'd better not slip up," sagely commented Mr. Barstow, and with that he dismissed the matter.

Luckily they were able to sublet the machinery and building contracts, but no one wanted the job of delivering and laying the pipes—not at any price. The reason was soon apparent. Iron water-pipes were just then very difficult of purchase anywhere in the country. The Pittsburg puddlers, whoever or whatever they might be, were on strike. In other places where water-pipes were made the stock on hand had been ordered months in advance.

"I'm afraid it's all day with us," groaned the president, after these facts had been ascertained. "Barstow, it's up to you."

"To do what?" asked Barstow blankly.

"To get those water-pipes, take them to Guanica, and lay 'em."

"You can't?"

The heads of the Pan-American Construction Company assured him that they could not.

"Then I'll do it," said Pinkey complacently.

It was then that he sent for Pluribus Jones.

II

THAT was not his christening name, to be sure, but it was the name which had been carried on the payroll of the Pan-American Construction Company for more than a dozen years. Originally it had been E Pluribus Unum Jones, and whoever first made this application of the national motto had a nice sense of fitness, if not of reverence. For truly he was a Jones out of many. He was not as other Joneses. He was original, unique.

Among the few amusing traditions which the company had accumulated during its existence most of them had to do with Pluribus Jones. Being sent with a wrecking gang to pull down a condemned tenement block, he was found attacking with crowbars and screwjacks a brand new flat building, in calm defiance of the frantic owner and panic-stricken tenants. It required a court injunction and a squad of police reserves to stop him. Some one had sent him to the wrong street.

He had other unusual traits, such as a fondness for wearing bizarre clothes, a passion for raising cabbages during his leisure summer hours, and a habit of throwing up his job about once in six months—always being persuaded to return to it next day. But mainly his distinguishing characteristic was a lack of self-confidence, an absence of initiative, an absolute dependence on the letter of his instructions.

Of most of these things Pinkey Barstow had heard, and he had chuckled over them. He had even hunted up Jones at his work and watched him with silent en-

joyment. Now he was gazing at him with the enthusiasm of a discoverer as Mr. Jones sat on the edge of a chair in the vice-president's private office, hesitating whether to put his hat on the rug or hold it in his lap.

Mr. Jones was not a handsome man, nor a big one. He was lean and undersized and of uncertain age, probably somewhere in the forties. Also he was amazingly plain featured, with a bristly, undecorative sandy mustache, a peculiar scar bisecting his left jaw, and one useless eye which stared, stonily, sternly, and unseeingly straight ahead, while the other shifted uncertainly this way and that.

This lack of personal attractiveness, however, rather increased than impaired his value to the Pan-American Construction Company. Under the baleful glare of that sightless eye a gang of Italian laborers would do more work in a day than any foreman could get out of them in three. And no wonder. Judging him by that bristly mustache, that bisected chin, that one bad eye, you might believe him capable of committing almost any atrocity, from plain assault and battery to multiple homicide.

Yet at heart Pluribus was a mild, peace-loving person. His ordinary speaking voice was a low-pitched, apologetic monotone, although when he was deeply stirred it had in it a few squeakily harsh notes. He was almost a timid man, too, and had not chance bestowed on him a deceptive exterior he would have been generally bullied.

Such was the lieutenant whom Pinkey Barstow had chosen in this crisis of his affairs.

"Jones," said Barstow, beaming genially upon him,

"you and I have got to get 150 tons of water-pipe delivered in New York within fifteen days. The foundry people say we can't have 'em. But we must. I want you to find a way to make these fellows loosen up. How soon can you start for Pittsburg?"

Pluribus Jones gasped. He could have been no more astonished had he been asked to take a wheelbarrow and dam the Hudson.

"Me, Mr. Barstow! You don't want me, do you?"

"Of course I want you. Why not?"

"But—but— Why, Mr. Barstow, I—I couldn't—"

"Oh, yes, you could," interrupted Barstow soothingly. "You're the only man connected with this concern who can do it. I know you, because I've had an eye on you for the last few months. I've seen what's in you. Now don't bother me with details, for I don't know 'em; and don't fuss about expense. Go where you like, spend what you please, but get—that—pipe." Whereupon Pinkey Barstow put his heels on the closed cover of his roll-top desk and opened his morning paper to the sporting page.

Mopping the perspiration from his forehead, Pluribus Jones retreated to the outer office, slumped into a chair, and remained in a dazed condition for fully half an hour. Then he roused and tiptoed to the door of Mr. Barstow's room. Pinkey beamed once at him over his newspaper, and gave him no more attention. Twice this performance was repeated. At 12.30 Mr. Barstow departed for luncheon, patting Mr. Jones on the back as he passed.

Then arose Pluribus Jones, demanding facts, figures, time-tables, and a check-book. The six-o'clock express bore him west. He was absent ten days.

When he reappeared there were lines about his mouth corners, his forehead was wrinkled, his eyes were sunken. He announced that the water-pipes were on their way east.

III

WITH the vicissitudes attending the further progress of those water-pipes toward Guanica this narrative is not chiefly concerned. Doubtless the details would be interesting from an industrial or a technical standpoint. For there were vicissitudes. They began with a scarcity of South American bound steamers. How the half-owner and captain of the Norwegian banana-carrying tramp, *King Olaf*, was induced to accept cargo for a port two days' sail beyond his legitimate destination, how the voyage started with a bump from an East River car float, and was further enlivened by encountering a tropic-born hurricane off the island of Jamaica—these items must be accepted in a lump.

The eccentric behavior of a propeller blade during the storm, however, is of more or less importance. The blade had been cracked by contact with a piece of wreckage. Ultimately it was "raced off" the shaft, but instead of dropping quietly and decently to the bottom of the sea, it elected to be hurled violently through the stern plates, leaving a jagged hole exactly at the *King Olaf's* water-line. You could have thrown a cat through that hole. Promptly the Caribbean began pouring in faster than two steam-pumps could lift it out. To lighten the stern it was found necessary to shift part of the water-pipes to the forward deck, where they were piled hastily and promiscuously.

Thus it happened that when the rusty-funneled banana steamer, after some fifteen days of unquiet navigation, finally limped within sight of Guanica she was wofully down by the head, steering like a mud-scow and looking like a floating foundry. Then, with the coveted port nearly gained, with a much-needed dry-dock almost within hail, the final blow fell.

Pluribus Jones had come below to make report of it. Leaning against a cabin stanchion, he gazed dolefully at Mr. Barstow.

That gentleman, although the hour was only eight in the evening, was reclining in his berth. This was because he spent most of his time there, not by reason of illness, but from choice. He was attired, as usual, in striped pajamas of baby blue and white. He had clasped his hands behind his head, revealing two bare forearms, dimpled at the elbow and of that fair softness of tint which made his nickname appropriate. Mr. Barstow was not posing. He had assumed that position in order to avoid being spilled out on the cabin floor, for the *King Olaf* was still wallowing most ungracefully over the perturbed surface of the Caribbean.

"Well, Pluribus," observed Pinkey Barstow, "I see that the old tub is still afloat. But why have they stopped her? Engines broken down?"

"It's worse than that, sir," gloomily responded Mr. Jones. "The engines are all right, but we can't go into port. We've just been warned to stay out."

A revolution, it seemed, was then in progress. The rebels had seized the Guanican navy, one second-class gunboat, and were about to try conclusions with the antiquated old fort which was supposed to guard the

city. An outgoing coast-liner had just hailed the *King Olaf*, bringing news of the state of affairs.

"That's interesting, eh?" commented Mr. Barstow. "And what does Captain Andersen say?"

"Say!" ejaculated Jones. "He says a lot. First he ups and cusses us and them water-pipes most outrageous. Then he says he's going to pitch 'em all overboard and steam back to Jamaica after repairs and bananas."

"Throw our pipes overboard!" Mr. Barstow lifted himself on a dimpled elbow. His mild blue eyes livened with interest. "The deuce he is! Pluribus, you go up and tell that pie-faced old viking not to touch one of those pipes—not a single one."

"That's just what I've been a-doing, Mr. Barstow."

"Yes; and then?"

"Then he jumps for me with an iron belaying-pin and I guesses he means for me to go below—so I came."

Pinkey Barstow grinned appreciatively. "Pluribus, you're a mind-reader. Have you any idea what you're goin to do next?"

"No, sir."

For a moment Mr. Barstow fixed on him those mild blue eyes. Then he spoke, calmly and without passion:

"Well, you're going back on deck to see that those pipes are not thrown overboard and that Captain Nudd Andersen takes this leaky old kettle straight into Guanica and ties her up at the nearest wharf."

The one good eye of Pluribus Jones stared in astonishment at the pajama-clad person in the berth.

"But, Mr. Barstow, the—the revolution. They'll

be shooting cannon-balls all over the harbor. They'll—"

"See here, Jones; what have we come all the way down here for? To bring these water-pipes and lay 'em in the streets of Guanica, haven't we? And now that we're here, do you suppose we're going to be stopped by one of their dinky little revolutions. We are on a civil business. Those chaps will not dare shoot at us—couldn't hit us if they did. So you go on up and tell that fool captain to steam ahead. You seem to know how to tame him."

"But—but—" The complexion of Pluribus Jones had become a light pea-green under the pale rays of the swinging lamp. His lean fingers clasped and unclasped nervously.

Not to make a mystery of these symptoms, Mr. Jones was frightened. He had less fear of the angry Norwegian captain, however, than of the responsibility involved. His face had not blanched during the hurricane. The management of the steamer had rested on other shoulders. He had smoked his pipe and watched the fury of the storm with an impersonal interest, like a spectator at a play. Nor had he been frightened when he had been chased below. No, Jones was not that kind of a coward. It was this being thrown on his own resources which made him quail.

But now, as previously, he began to feel the influence of those calm, confident eyes of Mr. Barstow. They were regarding him once in a way that suggested a wonderful faith in him. Gradually the unhealthy hue faded from the cheeks of Pluribus Jones.

"Perhaps, Jones, you'll need that artillery of yours that we've lugged along. Better get it out."

Mr. Barstow spoke with careless ease, just as if all obstacles had already been met and overcome. Reaching under his pillow, he brought forth his cigarette materials and proceeded to manufacture one of those paper-clad abominations. As he fitted a leaf of rice-paper between the fingers of his left hand he glanced up at Pluribus and smiled. It was a most engaging smile, conveying as it did a hint of unbounded confidence in the object of it.

Jones hesitated no longer. Going to his own berth opposite, he pulled from a locker two long-barreled revolvers of big bore—blue-steel, businesslike appearing engines of sudden death. Then, buckling around his waist a leather belt bristling with cartridges, he started up the companionway stairs.

On deck the preparations for jettisoning those objectionable pipes were under way. A derrick-boom had been rigged above the main hatch and the blocks were beginning to creak under the weight of a dozen six-inch pipes. Captain Nudd Andersen, wide-eyed, beetle-browed, bull-throated, looked up to see Mr. Jones coming forward. He had anticipated further argument, for he still gripped the iron belaying-pin.

This Jones, however, seemed a very different personage from the one who had so recently been chased below. Nor was the difference wholly due to the big revolvers and the cartridge belt. His whole bearing was formidable. There was a menacing look in those unmated eyes of his.

Mr. Jones wasted no time. Elevating one of his weapons to angle of forty-five degrees directly above the captain's head, he pulled the trigger. The revolver spoke roaringly, and a forty-eight caliber bullet flat-

tened itself with a vicious spat against the steamer's funnel.

The ensuing panic was immediate and comprehensive. The derrick tackle ceased creaking. The crew took to cover. Captain Andersen scrambled behind a water-butt and lay down with his face to the deck. Again Jones fired, the bullet zipping through the forward rigging. There was no response. The *King Olaf's* crew contained no impromptu heroes. It was composed entirely of Norwegian sailormen, hired at a ridiculously low monthly wage, and not one of them had a desire to be shot at. Pluribus was master of the situation.

So, after a quarter of an hour's powwow between Mr. Jones and Captain Andersen, the latter emerged cautiously from behind the water-butt and gave the order to go ahead. Lumberingly the *King Olaf* got under way and made for the black mouth of the inner harbor that was outlined on either side by winking range lights. As she poked her junk-piled nose past the first of these lights those aft could make out a gunboat at anchor abreast the frowning walls of the distant fort. It was true, then. There were lights on the gunboat, and from her decks came the rattle of ammunition hoists and the shrill call of a bo'sun's whistle. She was clearing for action.

On the banana steamer terror, or a good imitation of it, reigned. Amidships were gathered most of the crew, pointing nervously at the warship and casting glances of appeal astern. Just forward of the after-cabin stood Captain Andersen and his mates, exchanging gruff whispers. Against the taffrail leaned Pluribus Jones, one of his big revolvers in either hand, and

his good eye fixed sternly on the man at the wheel. Mr. Jones was getting nervous, too.

At this critical moment a high-pitched shout of warning arose from the gunboat. The next instant the white finger of a searchlight was stretched out across the dark water and touched tentatively the *King Olaf's* quarterdeck. As Mr Jones turned his dazzled eyes away from the blinding light his gaze fell upon Pinkey Barstow, who, immaculate in white ducks, had just emerged from the companionway. Then a gun boomed on the warship, and off to leeward was heard a sousing splash. The knot of Norwegian sailors in the waist ducked as one man.

"The beggars meant that for us, didn't they, Jones?" observed Mr. Barstow.

"I—I guess they did," admitted Jones faintly.

"Well, they mustn't do it again. We'll run in a little nearer, Jones, and then you take a boat and go over and tell 'em to stop. Tell 'em you'll send for the whole United States navy if they don't."

"Yes, sir, I'll tell 'em. I'll get ready right away." There was a note of relief in the voice of Pluribus Jones. Once more his responsibility had been shifted. All that remained now was to obey orders and, compared to acting for himself, that was easy.

Eagerly he darted down into the cabin. When he reappeared he was wonderfully garbed. About his spare form hung in loose folds a long-skirted policeman's coat with two rows of brass buttons up and down the front. On his head was a huge fireman's helmet, one of those varnished leather affairs, with a shield in front and an eagle's head on top.

"I see you have your visiting clothes on, Jones," suggested Mr. Barstow. "Are you all ready?"

"Yes sir, all ready."

The *King Olaf* was stopped. Jones ordered a boat lowered, and when it was in the water, singled out a sailor to accompany him. Sullenly the man dropped into the boat and took up the oars. Off into the uncertain haze of cloud-filtered moonlight went Pluribus Jones on his audacious errand.

IV

REALLY it was more than audacity. To most of those on the *King Olaf's* deck it looked like sheer folly. Why Pinkey Barstow should send Jones on such a foolhardy enterprise no one will ever know. Mr Barstow himself did not know at the time, as he has since confessed. Perhaps it was merely an impulse born of utter desperation, perhaps it was prompted by a reckless desire to discover just how strong was his control of the pliable Pluribus. To those who knew him best Pinkey Barstow could be accounted for only in algebraic terms: Let x equal the unknown quantity, which was Pinkey. That Mr. Barstow had no definite plan beyond sending Jones off to the insurgent gunboat the subsequent events clearly showed.

The noise of the oars grew fainter and fainter, and died away. Five minutes passed—ten. Over the darkened harbor of Guanica settled an ominous silence. There lay the gunboat, her lights still shining, but no more cannon-shot boomed across the water. Off to

port, nearly two miles away, loomed the black bulk of the silent fort; beyond that, rising tier on tier as the streets climbed the hills, glimmered the capital of Guanica.

Half an hour elapsed without a word or sign from the gunboat. What did they mean to do? Did they intend to fire on the steamer again, or would they begin their duel with the fort? And what was happening to Jones?

Finally, coming faintly but distinctly, was heard a hail:

"Oh, Bar-stow!"

It was the voice of Pluribus Jones.

"What—do—you—want?" roared Pinkey through his hands.

"Come—over—here; I've—got—the—gunboat," responded the invisible Jones.

Incredible as the import of the words might be, there could be no mistaking it, for the shrill voice of Pluribus had good carrying qualities.

"Got the gunboat!" echoed Pinkey Barstow, staring blankly at the bull-throated Captain Andersen. "What the deuce do you suppose he means by that?"

"I dank he go looney by himself," growled the sailor.

"Well, you're mistaken, captain. If Jones says he's got the gunboat, then he has. We'd best run over and see. Get under way."

The *King Olaf's* commander grumbled some, but gave the order, and within a few minutes the banana steamer was lying alongside the warship, and Mr. Barstow had transferred himself to her deck. He was greeted by Pluribus Jones, who, unharmed, unfettered,

the fire helmet cocked rakishly over one ear, swaggered forward with the air of a conqueror.

"I've got a warship here, Mr. Barstow, and I'd like to know what to do with it," was his salutation.

"Pluribus, what the devil do you mean by saying that you've got the gunboat? Where's the crew?"

"Blessed if I know, Mr. Barstow. There wasn't a soul aboard when I got here. I could hear them rowing off down the harbor, and when I got to the ship there wasn't one of 'em left. I couldn't tell 'em what you said, of course, so I just climbed up and took possession."

And that was all there was to it. It was a mystery—a full-fledged, life-size mystery. Search as they might they could find no clue to it. On the decks were certain traces of confusion and hasty departure. The six-pounders had been cast loose and prepared for action. There were the swab-buckets and the piles of solid shot, just as the gunners had left them. In the cabin articles of uniforms were scattered about, while rummaged lockers spoke of a sudden leave-taking.

But what had been the cause? Why should the Guanican rebels abandon their prize just at the moment when they were about to train her guns on the old fort? Mr. Barstow gave it up.

As for Jones, he was not interested in the conundrum. The one important fact to him was that, unaided, single-handed, and of his own motion, he had captured a warship. No one had told him to do it. The feat had not even been suggested. But he had done it. Here was substantial evidence of his achievement. Moment by moment he straight-

ened and stiffened. He held his chin well up. He wagged his head when he talked. His stride became a strut. With a delicious air of proprietorship he conducted Pinkey Barstow about the gunboat, finally leading him up to the bridge.

"I'm going to have a look at that fort," he declared, swinging the searchlight around and fumbling with the switch keys.

Presently he found the proper combination, and a broad white ray leaped over the water. Out of the distant darkness jumped the crumbling bastions and moldy casements of Guanica's century-old *moro*. As the circle of light swung up the walls the central tower was revealed, and they saw that from a staff a flag was floating.

"Jones, isn't that a white flag?" demanded Mr. Barstow.

"I should say it was white."

"Then the fort must have surrendered."

"Yes," observed Mr. Jones complacently, "I expect that I've captured that, too."

Never did Roman general thundering down the Via Appia with his victorious legions at his heels enjoy a keener satisfaction than was granted to Pluribus Jones there on the deck of Guanica's only gunboat. His pose was superb. Thrusting one hand between the brass buttons of the police coat's capacious breast, squaring his shoulders anew, he gazed at the white rag that waved dejectedly above the old tower.

"Do you know, Mr. Barstow, this is the first warship I ever took, and that's the only fort I ever captured? It's a funny feeling, ain't it?"

With never a smile on his bland features Pinkey Barstow turned and held out his hand.

"Mr. Jones, allow me to congratulate you. But you were bound to do it sooner or later. I knew that long ago."

"Honest, Mr. Barstow? Did you think I could?"

"Think! Why, I was certain of it from the first."

A long, deeply breathed sigh of content escaped from Mr. Jones. With it he breathed out the last of his unreliance on self. From then on he was captain of his soul.

V

It was not until the gray, uncertain dawn of the next morning that the mystery was solved. Mr. Jones had borrowed the *King Olaf's* engineer and second mate, and had run his warship in beside Guanica's biggest pier for the purpose of reconnoiter, when there approached from the shore a little band, led by an imposing personage who wore a frock-coat and held above his shiny silk hat a cane on which had been tied a white handkerchief.

"Ah, a truce party," observed Barstow, lighting a fresh cigarette and peering over the rail. "Now, perhaps, we'll learn what some of this means. You talk to them, Jones; you're the doctor."

The imposing personage spoke first in Spanish, eloquently and at some length, but Jones only shook his head. French was tried next, with no better result.

"Can't any of you talk English?" demanded Jones autocratically.

"Bueno! Los Americanos!" exclaimed the frock-

coated personage delightedly. "That is excellent, señors, excellent! You will understand, therefore, that we come to protest against a barbarity. His Excellency el Presidente and his councilors have fled to the mountains. The army has fled, also. Surely you will not for hire hurl your dynamite among innocent women and children and peaceful citizens? You will not destroy our beautiful city with your dread *Vesuvius*?"

"Dynamite! Vesuvius!" Mr. Jones was more puzzled by the English words than he had been by those of a foreign tongue.

Not so Pinkey Barstow. Following with his eyes the direction in which the silk-hatted personage had waved his hand, Mr. Barstow's gaze had been turned to the *King Olaf*, which still swung at anchor out in the harbor. Never did banana steamer look her character less. Projecting from either side of her bow was an eighteen-inch water-main, giving to her, from that distance and in that light, a most formidable and warlike appearance.

And what warship was it which looked like that? Why, the U. S. S. *Vesuvius*, to be sure; the far-famed dynamite thrower, of which, once upon a time, we had expected great things, but which had failed, somehow or other, to come up to specifications. Now he remembered. The *Vesuvius* had torpedo tubes projecting from her bow, and they had been about equal in size and destructiveness to those water-mains on the *King Olaf*.

A few queries put to the leader of the truce party elicited corroborative facts. Yes, the *Vesuvius* had been expected. Both the Government and the revolu-

tionists had threatened to buy her; both had sent agents to the United States for that purpose. He of the frock-coat expressed the hope that the insurgents would be content with a peaceful history, would not test the dynamite-throwing qualities of their destroyer on the town.

Mr. Barstow grinned and took Pluribus Jones to one side.

When the honorable President of Guanica, with his honorable councilors and his breathless army, was summoned back from the mountains, when all those valiant gentlemen learned that they had been scared out of their capital by a storm-battered banana steamer laden with iron water-pipes, they were more or less chagrined. But when they discovered that the victorious insurgents had been scared just as badly, if not worse, and had lost their stolen gunboat in the bargain, then they felt better.

First of all they laughed loud and long. They embraced each other, after the manner of the Latins. Lastly they looked upon the handsome features of Pluribus Jones, observed the self-confidence with which he bore himself, the air of authority with which he spoke, and marveling much, they hailed him as a hero and the savior of Guanica. Jones did not deny it.

They began by holding a reception in his honor on the plaza. Then they presented to him a purse of gold, accompanied by a Latin-inscribed parchment on which were set forth the details of his heroism and the country's gratitude. A few enthusiasts clamored for a bronze monument of him to be erected opposite that of the great Bolivar, but this enterprise Jones discouraged. All that he desired, he said, was a gang of

workmen to lay his water-pipes through the streets of Guanica, as per contract. The minister of war promptly put a regiment at his disposal and lodged him luxuriously in the Government palace while the work progressed. Also his friend, the Honorable Barstow, was similarly favored.

And when the job was completed, more than a month inside the forfeit limit, the high officials accompanied the departing Jones and his friend to the harbor mouth on the restored gunboat, with the Government's best band playing American coon songs and salute guns banging at the rate of two a minute.

At last "the tumult and the shouting died." The two had retired to the afterdeck of the coast-liner, away from the curious eyes of the other passengers.

"There was a time," observed Mr. Jones reflectively, as he gazed back at the disappearing harbor mouth, "when I wouldn't have believed I could do the things I've done since I first sighted that place—capturing a warship, and all that."

Mr. Barstow laid a fraternal hand on his shoulder and spoke as one who voices an old conviction.

"But you were bound to do something of the kind sometime, Jones; it was in you."

"Yes, I suppose that's right," assented Pluribus Jones.

For the Show

E. J.

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